

# PLUCK AND LUCK

**THE BOSS OF THE CAMP**  
**OR THE BOY WHO WAS NEVER AFRAID**  
*AND OTHER STORIES*

*By An Old Scout*



Suddenly there was a sharp cracking sound, and the bridge gave way, carrying the horse and rider with it, down into the canyon. The man gave one yell of despair as he vanished from their sight.



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## The Boss of the Camp

OR, THE BOY WHO WAS NEVER AFRAID

By AN OLD SCOUT.

### CHAPTER I.—The Ragged Boy Who Wanted Work.

The sun was just setting over the mountains of Northern New Mexico when a boy of about eighteen years, mounted upon a half-starved Indian pony, rode up to the office of the North Star mine. He was tall, dark, and slightly built and his black, flashing eyes showed him to be a boy of determination; yet his appearance was anything but attractive, it must be allowed, for his clothes were mere rags, his feet bare and his hat just a bit of old felt which bore little resemblance to its former self; while, as for the horse, it had evidently seen its best days many years before the North Star Mine was opened on Bad-man's Creek. Its bridle was simply a rope and the saddle an old bag, yet the boy dismounted with all the assurance of a New York stockholder come out to inspect the property, hitched his pony to a post and walked into the office with the air of a king.

"Do you want to hire a boy, sir?" he asked of Mr. Martin, the superintendent, who stood writing in a big book behind the high desk.

"No, I don't," he replied, shortly. "If you're a spy the quicker you get off these premises the better. Go back and tell those who sent you that Jack Martin is right and means to stay here if he has to face a hundred men."

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean, sir," said the boy. "Nobody sent me here."

"Are you sure?"

"Why, I ought to be. I'm nobody, although you seem to think I'm somebody. I suppose there is nothing criminal in a poor fellow like me asking for work?"

Mr. Martin laid down the revolver, and, with an anxious glance through the office window, said:

"Perhaps I've made a mistake, boy. I am all alone here. There's a strike on in this mine."

"So I heard, sir; that's why I came up to ask for work."

"What's your name?"

"Harry Holloway, sir."

"Where are you from?"

"Hangtown, Arizona."

"Humph! A bad town."

"Used to be, but it has been better of late, since Mr. Gibson took it in hand."

"That's that smart boy they've made mayor over there?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm told he came into town a mere tramp?"

"That's right, sir; he's one of the richest mine owners in the place now, and he's a fighter, too. He's run all the bad men out of town."

"I wish some one would run the bad men out of this region, then," sighed Mr. Martin. "I said we had a strike here, but it isn't really a strike. The men simply demand protection from the toughs who have made themselves the pests of this neighborhood, and as I can't give it to them, they've all quit work and left me here alone. Boy, why did you leave Hangtown? What brings you over here?"

"Oh, it's a long story, sir. My father was killed in the mines and—and, well, he had a bad name and everybody is down on me on that account. I couldn't find anything to do there, so we just started off on the tramp, me and Bill—"

"Bill? You have some one with you, then?"

"Bill's my pony, sir. He's outside."

"Oh!"

"I should think if you were all alone you might find some use for me, sir. I'll do anything and you can pay me whatever you like. As to the toughs, I've been bucking up against them ever since I was born. I'm not afraid."

"You are certainly a plucky fellow," said Mr. Martin, reflectively, "but it seems almost like murder to ask you or any one else to do what I have in mind."

"Never mind that, sir. Just tell me what it is and I'll do it. I told you once before that I'm not afraid."

"Very well. Then go to Arizona Jake's hold-out down at Wickedsburg, get in with the gang, find out what they mean to do and come back and let me know."

"That's a tough commission, Mr. Martin."

"Yes, tough in more senses than one. I thought you'd refuse."

"Then you thought wrong, because I'm going to accept."

"You'll do it?"

"I'll do my best. I was only thinking about—"

"What?"

"They pay."

"The North Star Mine will pay you well for any work you may do for them, young man."



"That sounds all right, but I've had something to do with these corporations before now. They sometimes forget."

"Well, then, how about me?"

"I'll trust your word, sir."

"All right. There's your job. It's a hundred for you when you come back here with any information of any value."

"That goes; and in the meantime——"

"In the meantime I stay right here. Arizona Jake has sworn to kill me and I shouldn't be at all surprised if he did it in the end, but I'm determined to die at my post."

"Whereabouts in Wicksburg is the hold-out of Arizona Jake?"

"That you'll have to find out for yourself."

"I'll do it. I'm ready to start right now. There's one thing I want to ask for, though."

"Not money—I won't pay in advance, boy."

"And I have no idea of asking it. I have no revolver. I might need one——"

"You will. Take this and here is a box of cartridges. I've got another."

"Thank you, sir," replied Harry, putting the revolver in his pocket. "Now I'll go."

He hastily left the office, unhitched Bill, and, vaulting lightly into the saddle, was off like a shot. Mr. Martin watched him until he had turned the bluff which marked the entrance to Rocky Run and then went back into the office and shut the door. It soon grew dark and the shadows fell particularly dense in Rocky Run, which was a long, narrow canyon, with Badman's Creek running through it and lofty precipices towering on either side.

Harry had never been to Wicksburg, which fully bore out its somewhat singular name, as it was reckoned the worst town in New Mexico, and many declared that it was the worst in the entire far West. It was quite a sizable place, too; there was a big quartz mill located on the creek there and its main street was lined with gambling houses, dance houses, liquor and concert saloons from one end to the other. People who were in position to know declared that it was "a cold day" when at least one man was not shot in Wicksburg and very often it was two or three, or even more. On one occasion this same Arizona Jake had shot down six men in cold blood and yet nothing was done about the matter. Nobody dared to do anything, for Arizona Jake was the acknowledged boss of the town. Now, Wicksburg lay in a deep hollow between the mountains about half a mile beyond the end of Rocky Run, and in order to approach it one had to cross Badger Canyon, which was a mere slit in the rocks about fifteen feet wide. The trail here was high above Badman's Creek and where it was broken by Badger Canyon a rude bridge had been thrown across.

Just before Harry reached this bridge he was startled by hearing the clatter of horses' hoofs and he peered forward eagerly to see what it might mean. The moon had now risen and its light struck down into the canyon, breaking the gloom to a considerable extent, and Harry saw a young girl mounted upon a mustang come suddenly dashing around a bend in the rocky wall, closely pursued by two men equally well mounted.

"Stop, there, Jennie! Stop, or, by time, I'll put a bullet into you!" shouted one just as the girl gained the bridge.

Harry pulled out his revolver and gave Bill a violent dig with his heels, which sent him bounding forward. The girl saw him coming and uttered a wild cry for help.

"Come on!" shouted Harry. "Let them shoot if they dare!"

She dashed over the bridge, which bent under the weight of the horse.

The foremost man sped after her, threw up his revolver and fired. The shot flew past the girl, and, as bad luck would have it, took poor Bill between the eyes, but not before Harry had returned the shot. The next thing the boy from Hangtown knew he was flying over his horse's head. Bill dropped dead in his tracks and Harry fell sprawling upon the trail almost under the hoofs of the girl's horse.

## CHAPTER II.—How Harry Ran Up Against Arizona Jake.

It was a most dangerous moment for Harry Holloway, but, as the event proved, it was more for these two men who could find no more manly occupation than pursuing a helpless girl. Harry's shot told. The foremost man, wounded in the shoulder, fell back from his horse and dropped on the trail, while the frightened animal dashed on, almost crowding the girl's horse over the edge of the precipice, but saving Harry's life, for otherwise his brains would have been trodden out by the horse's hoofs before he could spring to his feet, which he immediately did.

"Save me! Save me!" gasped the girl, reining in, and another shot came whirling up the canyon, fired by the second man, who, with a savage exclamation, urged his horse onto the bridge. Suddenly there was a sharp, crackling sound, and, without other warning, the bridge gave way, carrying the horse and rider down into the canyon. The man gave one yell of despair as he vanished from their sight into the depths a hundred feet and more down to the creek. As for the wounded man, he sprang up and ran along the trail after his horse without saying a word and a moment later had vanished around the bend of the wall.

"Oh! Oh! Oh, how terrible!" exclaimed the girl, covering her face with her hands. "Do you think he is killed?"

"Hope so," said Harry. "What's it all about, miss?"

"They were after me," was the reply. "My name is Jennie Mills. I am the daughter of one of the foremen in the North Star Mine. Those men are two Wicksburg toughs. My father sent me to warn Mr. Martin, the superintendent, that they mean to attack the mine. In some way they must have found out what I intended to do, for the first thing I knew they were chasing me. They would have killed me, too, if it hadn't been for you."

"I guess they would," said Harry. "If that other fellow succeeds in catching his horse I shouldn't wonder if he would come back and try to do it now."

"Then I must go back to town."

"It's the best thing you can do. I've just come from Mr. Martin. He started me over to Wicksburg to see what I could find out about the intentions of the gang. If you have any message



to send him I can take it, but how will you cross the break ahead?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Is your horse a good one on the jump?"

"He's a splendid horse. I've seen him jump wider spaces than that, but I should not want to try it. I'm so sorry your horse is dead."

Harry was sorry, too. He could have cried when he thought of poor Bill, who had been his companion for years. Our boy from Hangtown was sent out for business and he eagerly questioned Jennie Mills as to what she knew about the movements of Arizona Jake's gang.

He might as well have saved himself the trouble, for her information amounted to nothing beyond the fact that an attack was contemplated upon the mine. When or how it was to be attempted she did not know.

"This won't do," said Harry; "it was very brave of you to try and get over to the mine, miss, but Mr. Martin already knows all that you can tell him. I'll go back to Wicksburg with you, for I must find out more."

"Oh, if you only would," replied Jennie. "I'm afraid to push on now."

"How far is it into town?"

"Only a mile after you cross the bridge, but you needn't hope to accomplish anything, mister. A boy like you could never get into Arizona Jake's hold-out—oh, no!"

"Don't be so sure of that," laughed Harry; "and don't call me mister. I'm Harry Holloway. You can call me by my first name."

"They'll kill you, Harry. They'll kill you, sure."

"I'm not afraid. Something has got to be done. I've got to find out when they mean to attack the mine, and, what's more, I've got to get back and tell Mr. Martin. I wish you were not afraid to jump the broken bridge."

"I'm not, with you."

"That so? Then that settles it. Here we go."

Harry sprang on the horse behind the girl and took the bridle out of her hand.

"Hold on tight, Jennie!" he cried. "We'll either get across or we'll die together, one of the two."

Away they flew, covering the forty feet or so of the trail which separated them from the open space.

"Up! Up!" shouted Harry, for the critical moment had come.

The horse took the break nobly and caught the rocks with his forefeet. There was one awful moment of suspense, when it seemed to Harry that they must surely slip down into the ravine and then the horse scrambled to a sure footing on the trail, away they went dashing down the hill, with the electric lights of Wicksburg in full view before them and the lights of the different mines twinkling on the mountain slopes on all sides.

"That's Wicksburg," said Jennie, "but oh, Harry, what will become of us if Arizona Jake happens to be on the street? He knows what I went out of town for and he had just as soon kill us both as eat."

"Would he?" asked Harry. "Well, I'm not afraid of Arizona Jake or any other man. Here goes for Wicksburg and don't you forget it Jennie; before I leave town I'll have found out all I want to know, but I'm going to leave you right here."

"To leave me! Why?"

"Have you far to go?"

"No, not very. I turn down the first side street; my father's house is right there."

"I'll watch," said Harry, slipping off the horse. "If any one attacks you I shall be on hand."

Jennie rode on slowly and Harry hurried along the boardwalk past saloons, with their flashing colored lights, past concert halls with their braying bands inside the screen doors; past gambling houses, where the click of the faro chips could be distinctly heard and past a few stores where honest business was carried on, but it was getting late now and these were closed. Jennie had just come opposite to Mike Cunningham's saloon—one of the most notorious in Wicksburg—when three men came tumbling out shouting and yelling and evidently pretty well under the influence of Mike's whisky, which was said to be none of the best. They were big fellows, all three of them, and dressed in the usual style of the region, with big slouch hats and belts stuck full of revolvers.

"Say, by gosh, you can carve me up, Jake, if that hain't Mills' daughter back again!" sang out one of the trio, catching sight of Jennie just then.

Suddenly all three toughs made a bolt into the middle of the road, ready to head Jennie off. One caught the horse's bridle as it came up and the crowd on the sidewalk stood, watching anxiously, when they saw the ragged boy rush down the road, whipping out a shining revolver as he went.

"Drop that bridle! Don't lay a hand on that girl!" shouted Harry, covering his man like a flash.

"Who the blazes are you?" cried the man, turning on him. "Do you know that you've run up against Arizona Jake?"

### CHAPTER III.—Cornered in Dyball's.

Did Harry guess who he had run up against? Had he the least idea that the man who stood covered by his revolver was the notorious tough, Arizona Jake? He neither knew nor cared.

It was simply that for once in his life Jake had struck a person who was not afraid of him. One of his companions had slipped alongside of Harry, and, quick as lightning—it was all done in a second, so to speak—he threw up his revolver and fired straight at the head of Arizona Jake. The shot would have killed the outlaw to a certainty if Harry, with equal quickness, had not knocked up the man's hand with the revolver, which he should have used to defend himself. And as he did it there was a report and flash and the man dropped dead, leaving the boy from Hangtown and Arizona Jake facing each other, while Jennie, her bridle free at last, dashed off to freedom down the street. Harry threw up his revolver and covered the outlaw the instant the man dropped. But the movement was not necessary.

"Put up that thar shooting iron, young feller," drawled Jake; "you hain't got nothing more to fear from me. I'm a square man, I am; I don't bore holes in no feller what saves my life."

"I've got no growl with you, now, anyhow," said Harry, coolly. "I didn't want to see a lady interfered with—that's all."

"That's all right, too. Ef you'd minded yer own business you wouldn't never have run up



against me. Come on, now. I love the feller, man or boy, who dare's to stand up against Arizona Jake."

He gave the dead man a savage kick as he spoke, and, clutching Harry's arm, drew him away to the sidewalk. There was no one to interfere with them.

"I've got in with the very man I want to know," thought Harry; "if I work him right this may be the very thing; at all events, I'm not afraid."

Jake, avoiding Cunningham's, led the way into Milligan's dance house next door. It was a rough place. At the back was a small stage where cheap variety shows sometimes performed, but now there were only two men seated upon it, one hammering away for dear life on an old tin pan of a piano, while the other tortured a squeaky fiddle. To the sounds which came forth from both of these instruments—it would be a disgrace to call it music—some twenty couples were dancing. There were also a good many other men and women sitting at tables drinking, smoking and talking. Jake strode to the bar and turned down a tumbler half full of whisky.

"You don't want nothing to drink, boy. I s'pose?" he said.

"No," replied Harry. "I don't care for anything."

"You're right. Milligan's bug juice is not the sort of stuff for kids like you. Come on, now. I want to have a talk."

He led the way past the stage into a private room, where there were a number of men playing cards, and sat down opposite Harry at a table.

"Say, kid, who be you?" he asked. "I wanter know your name?"

"Harry Holloway, sir."

"Don't sir me. I'm no more used to it than I am to a biled shirt or a plug hat. You can call me Jake if you call me anything. Whar yer from?"

"Hangtown, Arizona."

"Hangtown be hanged. It uster be good up thar afore that feller Gibson got hold of the town, but it's no good for anybody now. What brought you down here?"

"Oh, my father died and I couldn't get anything to do. I've been on the tramp ever since."

"You look it. Got any dust?"

"Not a cent."

"Huh! Hungry?"

"I haven't eaten a morsel since yesterday morning," replied Harry, which was quite true.

"Well, well, well! That's a blame fine state of affairs!" cried Jake, and he began pounding on the table hard, which soon brought in a white-aproned waiter.

"Bring a big beefsteak and onyuns and lots of fried pertaters and bread for this boy, Jim," he said. "You can give him all he wants to eat and charge it to me," and then, after the waiter was gone, he added: "I'll get you some clothes to-morrow, Harry, but for to-night I'd rather you'd remain looking as you are, for I want you to do something for me."

"I'll do anything I can for you," replied Harry. "You're very kind to me, but I oughtn't to let you spend your money so."

"Never you mind that," was the reply; "see you later. I've got something else to do just now. Don't you go away from here till I come back—now mind."

Harry was touched, there was no denying it.

He had been brought up in a rough school himself, and the fact that this man was a murderer did not have the same effect on him that it would have done with a tenderfoot fresh from the States. He ate his beefsteak and enjoyed it, but at the same time he did not forget his mission. What he had agreed to do he proposed should be done. Harry finished his dinner and sat for over an hour waiting, but still Jake did not return. He was just about to give it up and start to leave the place when suddenly a shrill whistle sounded in the alley behind. The card players threw down their cards and all sprang to their feet. Harry was up, too, and started to go out by the front way, but found the door locked. The men meanwhile had opened a door in the rear and one of them called to Harry to come on.

"No," said the boy. "I've got nothing to do with you. I'm going to stay here."

"The blazes you are!" cried the man, springing forward, and before Harry understood what was coming he caught him by the throat, swung him around and ran him out through the door into the alley, where there were a number of horses ready saddled.

"You're going with us, young feller!" the man growled out, "Don't you kick, now, or it will be the worse for you. Them's Jake's orders and they've got to be obeyed."

Harry calmed down on the instant.

"Where are we going?" he asked.

"None of your business. Get on that thar horse."

"But Jake ordered me to stay here till he came back."

"You do, as you're told or by the great horn spoon I'll drop you!" snarled the fellow, whipping out his revolver.

Quick as he was to draw, Harry was quicker, and, what's more, he fired, and then, without waiting to see the effect, he ran for his life down the alley, followed by a dozen shots.

"Don't let the boy escape! He's a spy!" shouted some one, and Harry, heard them in full chase behind him.

He realized his danger fully.

Turning, he fired again and sprang through a half-open doorway and then dashed through another door, which he flung open and found himself in a brilliantly lighted room crowded with men.

Instantly Harry knew that he had made a mistake.

In fact, there must have been as many as fifty people gathered in Dyball's, and when young Harry Holloway, of Hangtown, came bursting into the room all eyes were upon him in an instant.

"Get out of here!" shouted the bartender, making a shy at him with a tumbler.

"I'm being chased!" shouted Harry; "don't let them kill me, gentlemen! I'm only a poor boy!"

Crack! Bang! Crash!

Things were lively enough in Dyball's now.

Through the back door half a dozen toughs came bursting in. Shots were fired as the door banged back and one striking the big mirror behind the bar shattered it into a thousand pieces; the crash might have been heard across the street.

One of the shots narrowly missed Harry's head. Hardly knowing why he did it, Harry pushed



aside the astonished gamblers and jumped up upon one of the faro tables.

This gave him the advantage of being able to fire down at, his enemies and yet made him, a conspicuous mark.

"Come on and take me!" he shouted, flourishing his revolver. "I come from Arizona, where bad men grow. I can hold my own with any man on earth."

#### CHAPTER IV.—The Chase Up the Run.

Instantly the revolvers began to crack and the glasses to fly, and before Harry realized what a storm he had started it was at its full height.

Harry fired several shots and the gamblers and toughs began popping away at each other, while the bartenders sent a shower of tumblers whirling into the room.

Several fell wounded, and there might have been some killed for all Harry could tell.

Suddenly the boy felt a stinging sensation in the left shoulder.

A bullet had just grazed him. He felt faint and sick, for he thought that he had met his death.

By this time the uproar was tremendous.

It was a free fight all around, and right in the midst of it some one pulled Harry off the table and hustled him into the street.

Our hero's head was swimming, and it was not until he was fairly out of the place that he realized that he was in the hands of a young man but a little older than himself.

He was comfortably dressed in the style of the country, and had a bright, intelligent face, but it needed only one glance on Harry's part to see that he was fresh from the East.

"You are wounded!" he said. "You want to look out for yourself. They are after you red hot, and they mean to kill you. Come with me."

"No," replied Harry, "I can't. I've got work to do. I'm not much hurt, I guess."

"You must come! There isn't a minute to be lost. Ah! Here they are now!"

Two toughs burst out of Dyball's. They were two of the gang who had worked their way clean through the saloon.

The young man dragged Harry into the doorway alongside of Dalrymple's grocery store. Fortunately the door was unfastened and responded to his touch.

In a second the boys were behind it, the young man supporting Harry, who began to show signs of fainting.

"Listen to me!" he whispered. "You're as good as dead if you don't give those fellows the slip. Know who that fellow is? Well, he's Dick Dowling, Arizona Jake's partner. He'll show you no mercy, but I think I can help you to escape."

"I was thinking," gasped Harry, "that if we could only get through to the alley we might capture a couple of their horses. I don't believe they are guarding them. I know it's rather cheeky, but—"

"Great Scott! Why, it's the very scheme I was about to propose!" laughed the young man. "You must be a mind-reader. Come on! Come on!"

They ran through the dark hall to its end, where there was a door leading out into the alley which was fastened, but they easily opened it and passed out.

They were now two doors below Dyball's and the horses were right before them.

Quick as thought Harry sprang upon the back of one and the young man lost no time in getting on another.

"Let her go!" cried Harry, and away they dashed up the alley, around the corner into Main Street, and so on up the hill to Rocky Run, when Harry pulled in and came alongside his companion.

"Can you jump a break of fifteen feet or so?" he panted.

"I'm blest if I know. I'm not much on horseback. Why do you ask?"

"We've got to do it if we go this way."

"Isn't this the way to the North Star mine?"

"Yes."

"There used to be a bridge?"

"Yes, but it's down."

"You mean over Badger canyon? I never could jump that break."

"Yes, but your horse might. I'm sure I can make mine do it."

"I couldn't. I'm afraid, and the horse would know it."

"Then I expect we are in for it! Hark! Don't you hear them? They are after us! They'll catch us at the break—it's right ahead."

The situation was getting serious, for the clatter of hoofs could be heard behind them, and Harry had not the least doubt that it meant that they were being closely followed by Arizona Jake's gang.

"You must leave me," said the young man firmly. "I can't make the jump! You can! Go on!"

"Never!" replied Harry. "I lost my head there in the gambling house, and if you hadn't interfered and hustled me out more than likely I would have lost my life too."

"I'll do whatever you say. I'm no horseback rider, and I might as well commit suicide at once as to try to jump that break."

Harry reined in. "Jump up here behind me," he cried. "This horse is a bully one. He can jump with two. Quick now! There isn't an instant to be lost!"

The young man obeyed.

Harry looked back and saw half a dozen mounted men coming along the canyon in full pursuit.

They shouted something which he could not understand, and fired, but the shots must have fallen short of the boys, for Harry could not hear the "zip" of the bullets as they dashed on.

Again and again the brave boy dug his heels into his horse's flanks.

"Up! Up! Up, boy! Up!" he shouted, as they flew forward.

"I shall fall off!" gasped the young man. "I'm slipping now."

"No, you're not! Throw your arms around me and hold on! Now shut your eyes! Here we go!"

The break was right ahead now.

Harry yelled like a young Indian, thus firing the horse up to the task he had to perform.

The tough little mustang responded nobly, clearing the break with three feet to spare.

"That's the talk!" cried Harry, and then instead of keeping on he whirled the mustang around and brought him to a stand.

He whipped out his revolver and fired low.



The foremost of the gang was just about to make the leap, but Harry's bullet put an end to all that, for it took the horse between the eyes and the animal dropped dead upon the trail, throwing his rider clean over his head.

This brought all behind to a dead halt, of course.

Wheeling the mustang around once more Harry went dashing up the canyon and had soon vanished around a turn in the cliffs.

#### CHAPTER V.—The Dead Man on the Floor.

"By thunder, that's great! You're the bravest fellow I ever struck!" gasped the young man as soon as he could find speech.

"Well, it had to be done," replied Harry, coolly. "I don't know as I'm any braver than the next. All there is about it, I didn't have time to be afraid."

"Do you know who I am?" asked the other.

"No, I'm sure I don't. I'd like to, though," said Harry.

"My name is Rob Rollins. My father is the principal owner in the North Star."

"Hello! You've been there before, then?"

"Yes, a year ago. Who are you?"

"Oh, I'm just nobody," replied Harry. "I'm only a tramp if you have a mind to call me so."

"But you've got a name, I suppose?"

"Yes, and it's about all I have got. Harry Holloway is my name. I'm supposed to live in Hangtown, Arizona, when I'm home."

"What takes you to the North Star, then? I want to go there myself, but I don't—"

"You don't see why I should. Well, I'll tell you, but don't think that I mean to hitch on to you, for I'm not that sort of fellow at all. I just want to finish my job and then I'm ready to go on the tramp again."

"We'll see about that. If there is anything I can do for you—"

"That's all right. We stand even and I won't put myself under obligations to any man. Mr. Martin, the superintendent, sent me over to Wickedburg to find out when Arizona Jake's gang meant to attack the mine. I've done all I could, and I think I shall be safe in reporting that they mean to make the attack to-night. As soon as I've told him and got my pay, I shall go about my business—that's all."

While they talked the boys kept the mustang going at full speed, and it was not a great while before Harry became aware that they were rapidly approaching the North Star.

"Strange we don't hear anything of those fellows behind us," he remarked. "It can't be possible that they've given it up and gone back."

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Rob; "but there's one thing that is weighing on my mind."

"What's that?"

"I can't understand why, after Arizona Jake showed the gang that you were his friend, they should attack you—that's what's puzzling me."

"And do you know it has puzzled me a good deal, too," replied Harry. "It looks to me as though that gang were not pulling together quite as much as people suppose. What do you think?"

"Just the same."

"Another case of our thinking alike. Jake told

me to wait there in the card room till he came back, and the other fellows tried to make me disobey him. Why was that?"

"Why was it that fellow turned on Jake and tried to kill him? It was one of his own men, wasn't it?"

"It certainly looked so. He came out of the gin mill with him and as soon as I took a stand against Jake he jumped in with me. There isn't the least doubt that he meant to kill him then; the other fellow seemed to be in it, too, for as soon as Jake shot the man he turned and ran away."

"Yes, and as soon as you took a stand against them those fellows were ready to kill you. There's something wrong about the politics of that gang, you may rest assured."

It was impossible to describe how much Harry enjoyed this chat with his new friend. Never before had he found a companion to whom he could talk freely. No wonder then that Harry took to him. He thought as they were riding into the mine yard that Rob was just the nicest fellow he had ever met in his life. There was a light burning in the window of Mr. Martin's office, but as Harry urged his horse toward the door it was suddenly extinguished.

"That's queer!" exclaimed Rob. "Whoever was inside there must have heard us coming. I don't understand why that light was put out."

"Why, it can't be anybody but Mr. Martin, unless some one has joined him since I left," replied Harry. "He was all alone in the mine then."

"Is there any way of getting in here except by Rocky Run?"

"Why, certainly. You can come in by the Arizona Trail—that's the way I came in the first place."

"But can you get on to the Arizona Trail from Wickedburg without coming through Rocky Run?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I was never in Wickedburg before to-night. I think likely enough there may be some roundabout way, though. Say, it's a little strange that Mr. Martin don't come out."

Harry had been waiting to see if the superintendent would not put in an appearance, for he felt more worried than he cared to admit over the sudden disappearance of the light. The big ore house and the three shaft houses loomed up dimly before them in the darkness, and the profound silence which pervaded the place was somewhat reassuring, for if the gang were there, Harry reasoned they would be likely to make themselves heard.

"We've got to find out what this means, Mr. Rollins," said Harry, dropping off the saddle.

"Well, I'm only Rob to you, Harry, and don't you forget it," was the reply. "Whatever danger there is ahead of us we pull together. My father is the biggest owner in this mine, and you may rest assured we won't forget what you have tried to do for the North Star to-night."

"That's all right," said Harry. "Have you got a revolver?"

"Yes."

"Better get it out, then, and don't talk. Depend upon it, there is something wrong here, or Mr. Martin would have been out before this."

Rob drew his revolver while Harry, who already had his out, walked boldly up the steps and tried



the office door. It was locked, and the boy knocked on it with the butt of his revolver.

"Mr. Martin! Mr. Martin!" he shouted. "I'm back again! Open the door!"

There was no answer. Harry and Rob stood listening breathlessly.

"Let's light out!" breathed Rob. "I'm sure there is something wrong here."

"Hark!" whispered Harry. "Don't you hear the horses? Those fellows are coming at last!"

"Blest if you're not right. So much the more reason why we should light out! Let's go now!"

"Not till I know what's going on inside here," said Harry, firmly. "If I can't get in by the door maybe I can by the window."

He went down the steps and tried the sash. It was not fastened. Harry threw it up and peered into the office. It was too dark to see much, but as near as he could make out there was no one inside.

"This thing has got to be settled!" he exclaimed vaulting in through the window.

To his horror he came down upon the body of a man lying stretched upon the floor, but though he landed good and hard upon it, there was not a sound.

"Oh, Rob! There has been murder done here!" cried Harry as he sprang aside.

## CHAPTER VI.—What Are You Going to do with That Boy?

"What is it?" cried Rob. "Harry, they are right upon us! There isn't an instant to lose!"

"I've got to light a match and see what's here!" gasped Harry.

He did so, and to his horror saw that the man he had stepped on was Mr. Martin, lying upon his back dead, with a bullet wound in his forehead. Harry was so startled that he dropped the match which was immediately extinguished.

"Oh, Rob! It's Mr. Martin! He's been murdered!" he cried, and then before he could utter another word there came a rush behind him, a light flashed and our boy from Arizona found himself struggling in the grasp of two tough-looking citizens, while a third turned a dark lantern upon him, and there were others behind.

"That's the boy Jake caught on to! Hold him!" the man with the lantern cried.

"Bang!" went Rob's revolver through the open window.

The shot flew wild, and Harry struggling to free himself, saw his friend turn and run off into the darkness as fast as his legs could carry him. At the same instant a dozen or more mounted men came dashing into the mine yard. It was useless to struggle now. The office was soon filled with the outlaws and the electric light being turned on all was as bright as day. Harry saw that the big iron door at the other end of the room had been blown open, and he could see a great pile of bags inside. There could be no doubt about the bags being what the outlaws were after, for their value was very great. With more courage than wisdom, Mr. Martin had remained at the mine to defend them, and the attempt had cost him his life.

"Hold on to that boy!" bawled the man with the lantern. Then through the window he shouted:

"Catch that other fellow! Don't let him get

away," and out he sprang to put his own order into execution, apparently.

Just at that moment Harry succeeded in tearing him self free, but he lost his revolver in the struggle one of the men having snatched it from his hands.

"I give up, gents," he said, coolly. "You don't have to shoot me! I'm only a poor boy!"

There he stood with his back against the wall and four revolvers pointed at him.

"Four against one is long odds," he drawled.

"Will you all shoot me at once, or will you try it one at a time?"

"Plucky, by gaul!" laughed one of the men.

"Say, kid, what's your name?"

"Harry Holloway. What's yours?"

"Don't get fresh. Where are you from?"

"Well, I'm from Wickedburg just now. I belong over in Arizona when I am to home."

"Hain't you the feller what saved Arizona Jake's life in Wickedburg to-night?"

"I believe I am."

"I know he is! That's the boy," said a voice at the window.

There stood Dick Dowling looking into the room.

"T'other one's nobody," he added; "he's got off and we'll let him go, but that feller shot my horse at Badger canyon. He came here to warn Martin—that's him."

"He'll not warn Martin now," replied the other. "You may have a score to settle with him, but I've got a bigger one."

"That's what you have, Barney," replied Dick, springing in by the window. "Only for him your brother would have been here now, and Jake lying as dead in Wickedburg as Martin seems to be here. The boy is your game. Why don't yer do him? If he'd been the death of my brother and I was in your shoes, he wouldn't be standing there grinning like he is now."

"Just so," replied Barney. "Every man knows his neighbor's business better'n his own. It's because he was the death of my brother that I don't shoot him. How deep is the main shaft on the North Star, Dick?"

"Uster be three hundred and twenty-five feet when I worked here," was the reply. "I don't know how deep it is now."

"It's a good fifty feet more at least; that's his grave, Dick Dowling, and he's going down into it alive."

What about Harry's feelings now? Was he afraid? Perhaps. Still he did not show it. His voice did not even tremble when he spoke up and said:

"Say, boys, you wouldn't kill a poor fellow like me, would you? How should I know that Arizona Jake meant to turn on his friends?"

"Sound argument that, Barney," sneered Dowling. "If you don't want to do the kid for being the death of your brother leave him to me, and I'll do him for being the death of my horse."

"Open the door," said Barney, fiercely, and he sprang upon Harry and seized him by the throat.

Harry kicked and did his best to defend himself, but Barney slung him around as easily as if he had been a baby. In a second he had him by the back of the neck and running him out through the door, pushed him on toward the shaft house, which stood over that awful hole in the ground which promised now to be Harry's grave. Where was



Rob? Harry could see nothing of him as he went flying along, almost taken off his feet by the force with which Barney pushed him over the ground. They were close to the shaft house when the door was suddenly flung open and there in the full light of a large lantern which swung suspended from the ceiling, stood Arizona Jake with a rifle in his hand.

"Well, what are you going to do with that boy, Barney?" he asked, deliberately. "Perhaps you don't know that I would have had one of your brother's bullets in my brain now if it hadn't been for him!"

#### CHAPTER VII.—The Retreat into the Shaft.

The sudden appearance of Arizona Jake at the door of the shaft house brought the toughs to a halt. His demand to know what they "were going to do with that boy?" was clear and peremptory. It was plain to Harry that the toughs were still afraid of this man—just as plain to him as it was that Arizona Jake had in a great measure lost his influence with the gang.

"Back! Back, every one of you!" said Jake, sternly. "This boy saved my life and I mean to save his. Take that—and that! There's fight left in the old man yet. Take that, too, you suckers! Now, then, bub, it's life or death. You follow me!"

Jake fired three times and each shot told. Barney was one of those who went down, but the others hit were not so badly wounded that they could not join their companions in one grand rush for the shaft house door. Harry had made his rush before that. Before the firing began he made a bold dash to join Jake and got there. Jake as he fired his third shot, slammed the door and held it with shoulder and knee.

"Put up the bar, bub!" he cried. "Put up the bar! Quick, now! Quick!"

There was a big bar of wood standing near, and there were sockets against the door jambs ready to receive it. Quick as thought Harry seized the bar and jammed it down into place.

"We are safe for the moment," gasped Jake, who was as pale as death. "Now for the next move. I'm a bad man, bub, but I hope thar's some good into me. Anyhow, I'm going to save you from that thar gang if I never do nothing else in this world."

"Help me, too!" spoke a frightened voice from the corner behind a barrel. "Don't think me a coward, Harry, but I couldn't face those fellows—no, I couldn't! It was no use to try."

"Rob Rollins!" cried Harry, as his new found friend came out.

"That's me," said Rob. "For goodness sake what are we going to do?"

"Friend of yours?" Arizona Jake whispered hoarsely to Harry.

"Yes," replied Harry. "Help him as you would me. Tell me what to do and I'll do it. The bar won't hold them back. They'll be in upon us in a minute now."

"Yes," said Jake. "I know that, and if it did hold them they'd burn the old shaft house down to get at us. Got a match?"

"Yes."

"Light it, then. That's the talk. Touch it to the lantern, so! Now we can see what we are about.

Gee, what a racket they are making! Well, I've brought this here onto myself. My hold over the boys has been weakening for some time back and they are all ag'in me now. See that ladder? Down with you, now! It's the only way. Down, quick!"

The ladder led down into the shaft.

Rob, who had never been down in a mine, held back, but Harry sprang upon the ladder, calling to him to follow.

"Where are we going? To the bottom of the mine?" gasped Rob.

"Go, or, by time, I'll bore a hole into you!" hissed Jake, and Rob got upon the ladder more scared than he had ever been in his life before, as well he might be, for the bar had already cracked under the weight of the toughs thrown against the door and there could be no doubt that it was bound to yield.

But Arizona Jake was as cool as could be through it all.

"Look out for the tub," he called. "Keep close in to the ladder."

Then he cut the rope which held the big ore tub suspended over the shaft and down it went flying past the boys, striking the rocks, bounding off, striking again on the other side and then they heard it strike the bottom far below.

"Oh, Harry!" gasped Bob, "shall we ever get out of this alive?"

"Keep cool," said Harry. "Don't you worry. It will all come out right in the end."

"Do you mean to tell me that you are not afraid now?" panted Rob. "Oh, I wish I'd stayed in Wicksburg. I was a fool ever to come to the mine."

"Look out for the ladder!" shouted Jake, and from the way his voice sounded they knew that he was already in the shaft.

The boys clung to the rounds desperately, crouching as close to the ladder as they could.

Harry knew what was coming, but Rob didn't and he would have gone on descending and probably might have stepped upon our hero's head if Harry had not spoken a warning word.

Now the shaft ladders in mines where ladders are used, and this is only when the shafts are first started, are not made of one piece.

That, of course, would be impossible. The ladders are made of many small ones lashed together, and what Jake had done was to cut the top lashings of the first ladder before he ventured upon it. Then he cut away below as soon as he was on the second ladder, and, exerting all his strength, lowered the ladder and let it drop down into the bottom of the shaft.

"All right with you, boys?" he called.

"All right," replied Harry, cheerily.

"Then get down with you lively. Gosh! We are just in time! There they come!"

The door flew in with a crash and the shouts of the toughs could be heard above them.

"Gol blast him! He's taken the boys down the shaft and cut away the tub and the ladder!" they could hear Barney calling out.

The man was not dead after all, it seemed.

"Faster! Faster!" panted Jake.

"Fire!" yelled Barney.

A whirling of cold lead came flying down into the shaft.

"You'll have to do it by feeling, boys," said Jake calmly, extinguishing the light just before the shots came.



It was no time for talk and there was none made.

Shot after shot came whizzing down the shaft, but still the three fugitives continued, reaching the bottom after a few moments, where Harry stood breathless, waiting for Jake to come down.

"We are safe now," whispered the tough, hoarsely. "They can't get another ladder rigged up short of ten or fifteen minutes, and I don't believe they'll try it at all."

"What's the matter with you? What makes you speak so hoarse?" demanded Harry, quickly.

"Shot in the side near the heart," gasped Jake.

"Say, bub, I know the way out of here, so don't worry. I guess I'm going to pass in my chips, though. Say, light up now. I feel awful strange."

"Great Scott! What if he should die now?" cried Rob. "Quick, Harry. He has fallen against me! Do be quick!"

Harry lost not an instant in lighting the lantern, but he was too late.

Arizona Jake fell fainting against Rob, who caught him and laid him down on the slimy floor of the shaft.

"Oh, Harry!" he cried, "we are in for it now. We can't get up and we don't know how to get out. We are stuck in the shaft."

#### CHAPTER VIII.—A Golden Discovery.

It was a bad situation certainly, for it would have been simply an impossibility to get out of the shaft without help, and that meant starving to death with a dead man for company, perhaps, for the voices above had already died away.

Perhaps the toughs had gone after another ladder or perhaps they had given up the chase.

As usual, Harry acted promptly.

Seizing the lantern, he held it down over Arizona Jake so as to see the true state of affairs.

"He's still breathing, Rob!" he exclaimed, "but he's almost gone, though. I didn't know that he had been hit. Here, let's raise him up. Perhaps we can stop the bleeding. Be quick!"

They managed to get the tough into a sitting position and while they were at it he suddenly revived, opened his eyes and scrambled to his feet, exclaiming:

"Come on! Come on! I'm not gone yet. You can't do anything for me here, but you may be able to help me after we get out of the shaft."

He seized the lantern, and, waving it about, threw the light into a dark, narrow opening behind them.

He hurried on with feverish haste, coming to the end of the drift in a moment.

Now their way was blocked by what appeared to be a solid wall of rock. "Push!" cried Jake. "Boys, you'll bury me, won't you? If you do strike it rich here, young feller, put some kind of a mark over my grave; that's all I ask now."

Harry and Rob threw their whole weight against the stone and it tumbled over, disclosing a passage into the open.

Pushing through they found themselves standing on the side of a steep slope looking down into a long narrow valley. They were far down in Death Valley, which lay on the other side of the mountain, upon which the North Star mine was located.

It was a barren, desolate spot, where even prospectors seldom ventured. Not a blade of grass nor a tree nor any green thing grew there; hence its name.

Fifty feet below them was the dry bed of an old creek, down toward which Arizona Jake pointed.

"Harry," he said, faintly, "I'm dying. There's no help for me and I know it."

"No, no! Don't give up," cried Harry, throwing his arm about the unfortunate fellow, who was leaning heavily against him now.

"No use. I can't buck against it," gasped Jake. "Listen to me. When I worked in the North Star I was one of the few who ran this drift to its end. We didn't know we were coming into the valley, for the surveys were wrong, but we did come through the wall and we had to stop and so the drift was abandoned as you see it now and that shaft was given up. Then they went to work and opened a new one. Do you hear what I say?"

"Yes," replied Harry, but it was very hard to hear him, his voice had grown so faint.

"I went down into the valley afterward and prospected," continued Jake. "I thought there was gold there and I hunted till I found it. That was only three weeks ago, and—say, I'm going. Hollister owns this property, boy. Buy it—big thing. See that rock dam there in the bed of the creek? Look behind it—gold—yes—say, I'm a goner now."

These were Arizona Jake's last words.

The boys laid him down on the hillside, and worked over him the best they knew how for half an hour or more, but it was no use, for the man was dead.

Morning dawned over Death Valley clear and cool.

Not a sound was to be heard anywhere. Rob was asleep, stretched upon the ground, with his head on his arm, while Harry sat beside him pondering upon the strange turn his affairs had taken.

The dead body of Arizona Jake had been carried back into the drift and the big flat stone put in place in front of the opening. It was all that Harry could do for the poor fellow.

"Well, I did my part, anyhow," he thought, "and I don't see why I shouldn't rest easy and make all out of this secret that I can. I should like nothing better than to start a camp of my own. I'd be the boss of it, too, you bet. I'd like to see the gang that would drive me off."

It seemed like building castles in the air, for even if Death Valley was full of gold there was the owner, Hollister, to deal with.

Harry had not the faintest idea who this man Hollister was or where he lived, but he knew a lot about mining business.

It is a common thing out in New Mexico and Arizona to start a mine on another man's land and take one's chances of settling with the owner afterward.

Harry determined to try it out here in Death Valley, if the situation seemed to warrant it.

"Let me find the gold and I'll take care of the rest," he thought. "I'll have a camp in full blast here inside of a week."

It was now broad daylight and he woke up Rob,



who sprang to his feet, declaring that he had not been asleep at all.

"Come, that's all nonsense," laughed Harry. "You were asleep and snoring. It's morning now, Rob, and we've got to hustle."

"Yes," said Rob, "first thing we must do is to find the way out of this place."

"Not at all. Have you forgotten?"

"What?"

"What Jake told us last night before he died."

"Great Scott, Harry, you don't mean to go prospecting now?"

"But I do, though."

"It seems like robbing the dead."

"Nonsense! That man saved my life, but, then, I saved his. We can't help him now, but we can help ourselves. Come on, Rob. I'm going down to the big rock."

"But is there a way out of this hole?" asked Rob, anxiously, as they hurried down the hill.

"Of course there is—there must be, and we will find it—never you fear. Just think of it, if we should happen to strike it rich here we'll start a camp of our own."

"I guess I've got all I can do to run the North Star," said Rob, "but I suppose my father might put up to buy the property in case we do strike anything."

"Is your father a very rich man Rob?"

"Well, he is supposed to be so, Harry, but between ourselves, he is most awfully tied up. I've had everything I wanted ever since I was born, but from something I've heard lately I'm afraid if father should die I should have to hustle. Between you and I, Harry, I don't believe there would be enough to pay his debts when everything came to be settled up."

By this time they had reached the bottom of the hill and stood in the bed of the dry creek.

Harry had never lost sight of the big rock to which Jake had directed his attention, and he now led the way toward it.

There was nothing to show that the ground had ever been disturbed here, but when they went behind the rock there were traces that some one had been recently digging.

"Hello! A find already!" cried Harry, looking around.

He knelt down and pulled out from under the rock, which on the side did not come close down to the ground, a new spade and a pick ax.

"This is business!" he exclaimed. "Pitch in, Rob. We've got to get to work."

Rob did not feel much like it and he said so, but Harry handed him the pick ax and set him to breaking ground, while he shoveled.

It was easy work, for the ground had evidently been recently broken. They soon scooped out a sizable hole, but there was no trace of gold in the earth thrown up, and after a little, they struck hard pan and knew that they had gone as far as Jake could have done in his explorations.

"I'm sure I don't see what he could have seen here to raise his hopes," panted Harry, who was now all out of breath.

"Let's give up and start up the valley," said Rob. "I'm hungry as a bear. It may take us all day to get out of here. I believe Jake was only fooling after all."

"No," said Harry, positively, "I won't do it. I'm going to try again. I'm going to try right here."

He stepped forward and went down into a little hollow in the old bed of the creek.

Rob declared that he was too tired to work any more, so Harry took the pick ax and drove it into the ground, turning up a great cake of sun-dried sand and gravel.

"Oh, Rob!" he shouted. "Look here! Look here! I've struck it as sure as fate!"

The cake broke into a dozen pieces and there, among the sand and pebbles and scattered all over the bottom of the hole out of which it had come were tiny yellow flakes, thousands of them.

"It's gold!" shouted Rob, flinging up his hat. "By thunder, we've struck it rich. The sand is full of gold!"

## CHAPTER IX.—Between two Fires.

"Who is Hollister, Rob?"

"Don't know; never heard of the man. By gracious, Harry, that makes the third time you've asked me the question. Hooray! Here we are on the Wickedsburg road! This is the way I came over in the stage."

It was well on in the afternoon now. All the morning Harry and Rob had continued their prospecting, finding gold at several points along the bed of the creek.

After satisfying himself they had really made a valuable find, Harry carefully covered up their work, strewing the loose sand and gravel over the breaks.

And yet they had little or no gold to show. Only a little sand loose in their pockets. The gold they had discovered was in fine flakes and water was necessary to separate it from the sand.

There was no water in Death Valley and Harry Holloway knew perfectly well that he had a lot to do before he could become the boss of a prosperous mining camp.

"Never mind, Rob," he said, "we'll find out who Hollister is soon enough. Meanwhile I'm going to pitch right in and see what can be made out of our discovery."

"By gracious, Harry, you're not afraid to tackle anything. I never saw such a fellow as you."

"Well, a fellow don't get there by being afraid of what lies ahead of him, Rob. I've always wanted to be a mine owner and I think this is my chance."

"It's a rich find, undoubtedly, but it will take a lot of money to develop it. First of all, you've got to have water."

"Plenty of it there."

"Where? Not in Death Valley, surely?"

"Yes, in Death Valley. You don't know this country as I do. Under all those dry creeks there's water; all that is needed is to drive an artesian well."

"You speak as if artesian wells were selling for a cent a piece and—hark! There's horses coming down the pass."

"It's the stage. Maybe we'll get a ride," exclaimed Harry.

"By thunder, if it is then there's trouble. The horses are running away."

Suddenly three or four shots rang out, the reports echoing and re-echoing through the canyon.

"A hold-up!" cried Harry. "The toughs are at their work again."



"We'd better lay low."

"Not while there's work to do. Who's afraid?" cried Harry, dashing forward.

He seemed to forget the fact that his revolver had been taken away from him at the North Star, and he dashed on around the turn in the trail, almost running into a span of horses attached to a substantial road wagon.

They were running wildly, with the reins hanging down about their heels, while leaning back upon the seat, apparently in a fainting condition, was a young girl of about Harry's own age.

"Bang! Bang!"

Two shots rang out through the canyon as Harry planted himself in the middle of the road and seized the bridle of the off horse.

They dragged him a little, but he stuck to it and brought the team to a halt.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" a perfect fusillade came in answer, and Harry now saw a stout man without a hat running toward him.

"Father! Father! Oh, help my father!" cried the girl, suddenly rousing. "Don't let them kill him! Never mind me!"

The stout man now turned and fired twice and at the same instant a dozen mounted men came sweeping into sight.

"Take the bit, Rob!" he cried. "I must help that man. Give me your revolver if you still have it! Quick!"

"Say, I want that myself," cried Rob. He had taken the bridle, but his face was as white as a sheet. "Stay here, Harry," he added. "We'll fight together. Don't run any risk."

"Here's a revolver!" cried the girl, taking a fine Smith & Wesson off the seat beside her and throwing it down to Harry, who caught it on the fly and ran back to join the stout gentleman, whose vigorous firing had caused the toughs to halt and fall back.

"Thank you, young man," he called out. "My name is Hollister. I've got a hundred thousand dollars in gold in that wagon. If you will help me out I'll not forget you. Ah! Caught between two fires. I thought as much."

"Harry! Harry!" shouted Rob. "Here they come!"

They were in for a fight now and no mistake. The toughs had halted out of range of the revolver shots.

"Sweep 'em down, Barney!" shouted one. "There's a big boodle here!"

And Harry looking back saw Barney with one arm in a sling, with Dick Dowling and half a dozen others, dashing up the road.

"Stand by me, boy," cried Mr. Hollister, little guessing the excellent reasons Harry had for doing so.

"You take them this side and I'll tackle the other," replied Harry coolly.

He threw up his revolver and fired straight at Barney, who rode a little in advance of the rest.

Harry. "We won't make anything by that. The odds are dead against us, though."

"Then you don't expect to escape?"

"Bang!"

Once more he let fly and this time a horse fell on the trail, blocking the advance of the rest.

"Really, I don't see how we are going to," said Harry, who had unhorsed Barney on the other side, and downed another tough with a second shot.

Harry was quite right in saying that there really was no chance, and there is hardly a doubt that it would have ended in the killing of the whole party and the capture of the gold if at that most critical moment the Wickedsburg stage had not come rattling down the pass.

Barney's gang heard it, and gave up the fight.

To Harry's great relief he saw them turn back and go galloping away toward the approaching stage.

They had no notion of tackling it, however, for the driver was a plucky man, and always had two other good fighters with him heavily armed.

They turned aside into the cross-canyon and made good their escape, while the gang on the other side, knowing that their chance was gone, hastily halted, put their wounded on the horses and beat a retreat.

If any of the toughs were killed outright Harry never knew it for when the stage came up and halted and they had a chance to look, there were no dead bodies to be found.

There were six passengers in the stage, and of course they all sprang out as soon as they reached the wagon. Many of them were acquainted with Mr. Hollister, who was one of the owners of the quartz mill at Wickedsburg, and it goes without saying that they listened eagerly to his story of the fight.

"The bravest boys in New Mexico, sir!" declared the mill owner, patting Harry on the back. "My daughter and I would have been killed sure, if it hadn't been for them."

"Better go back to Wickedsburg, Mr. Hollister," said one. "These fellows will be laying for you. It isn't safe for you to go on alone."

"Well, I don't propose to, if these young fellows will go with us to Manning," replied Mr. Hollister. "My daughter is going to Frisco, and I've got this bullion to ship. What do you say, boys; will you see us through?"

Of course Harry wanted nothing better.

He consulted with Rob, who made no objection, so they got into the wagon with the mill owner and his daughter, and drove through to Manning, which was the nearest station on the railroad, twenty miles away, where they arrived safely without any further adventure.

The gold was shipped and Miss Evelyn was seen safely aboard the train.

"Now, then, boys, we'll put up at the Rogers House for the night," said Mr. Hollister. "I propose that we have as good a supper as old Winant, the landlord, can turn out, and we'll settle accounts before we eat."

After they were all seated at the table, he heartily thanked Harry and Rob for their assistance, and taking out his check book and a fountain pen, added:

"Now, I'm going to thank you in a little more substantial style, boys. How will a check for a thousand dollars strike you?"

## CHAPTER X.—Saved by The Wickedsburg Stage.

"Upon my word, young man, you act just as though you were not one bit afraid," exclaimed Mr. Hollister, as Harry coolly fired again.

"What's the use of being afraid?" replied



"It don't strike me at all," replied Harry.

"What? Not enough?" exclaimed Mr. Hollister, in a tone of surprise.

"For my part I won't take a cent," said Harry, "and Rob feels the same way; but there is something else you can do for me, if you will."

"All right. Anything you say goes, my boy. You've done me a big service, and I want to square accounts."

"You can do that very easily, sir," replied Harry.

"Give it a name,"

"Are you the owner of Death Valley, Mr. Hollister?"

"Well, I am of part of it, and I wish I wasn't. A worthless piece of land, if ever there was one. Why do you ask?"

"I want to buy in there?"

"You?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean? I only own on the east side of the creek line."

"If you'll let me tell my story, I think I can make my meaning clear to you, sir," replied Harry. "I want to say first, however, that I haven't got a cent, and so whatever bargain we may make, it will have to be on time."

"That will be all right," said Mr. Hollister, beginning to eat. "Fire away. Let's hear it all. I suspect you've made a strike down in Death Valley, young man, but you need not be afraid but what I'll use you square."

"Well, we have made a find in the valley," admitted Harry, and he went on and told his story, winding up by laying a sample of the gold on the table.

"This is a great piece of business!" exclaimed Mr. Hollister. "Do you mean to tell me that you found this gold in Death Valley?"

"That's exactly what we did, sir. What do you think of it?"

"Why it's all right. It strikes me, boys, that I'm a richer man than I thought for. Well, this is great."

"Perhaps I could get my father to help us," said Rob. "I'd like to see Harry take hold there, and—"

"Wait a minute," broke in Mr. Hollister, "I know your father very well, and I'm somewhat familiar with his affairs. I don't think it will be worth while to bother him."

Rob looked uneasy and said no more.

"I don't want any help," said Harry; "all I want is a chance to work. I've got a proposition to make you, Mr. Hollister. It may seem a bad one, but—"

"Go on," said the mill owner. "Don't be afraid. I'm always open to propositions from a smart fellow like you."

"Well, then," said Harry, "sell me a hundred feet along the creek in Death Valley on time. If I strike it rich the value of the rest of your property will be so improved that it will more than pay for the risk. If I fail you'll be no worse off than you are now."

"I say yes to that," laughed Mr. Hollister.

"How much time do you want—twenty years?"

"No, sir; twelve months."

"Hum! You know something about the mining business, I fancy."

"I ought to; I've been around mines all my life. What's to be the price?"

"What do you say?" asked Mr. Hollister, leaning back in his chair.

"It's for you to say, sir. You are selling."

"Not at all. You are taking chances. I have considered the property worthless until now. Have you mining knowledge enough to decide? Wouldn't it be better to let some practical man examine the creek?"

"If you say so, certainly."

"But I don't say so on my own account. I speak solely on yours."

"Then I say no. I'll take my chances."

"All right. Name the price you are willing to pay. I'll give you a year's time, secured by a mortgage of two-thirds the valuation. Fire away, Harry."

"Twenty thousand dollars," said Harry, doubtfully.

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Hollister. "I like that. It's none too much, in case you succeed, and on the other hand, it is enough for you to pay, considering that you are taking big chances. Call on me to-morrow at the mill and I'll draw up the papers. Now then, boys, go in and win."

## CHAPTER XI.—Business.

Next day before dawn, Mr. Hollister and the boys started back over the Wickedsburg trail, reaching that town safely. Here Harry found that his fame had preceded him. Quite a crowd came around the wagon when they alighted at the mill.

"Them's the fellows!" they cried. "There's the boy what downed the toughs!"

His fame increased still more when the rumor went around from gambling house to gambling house, and barroom to barroom, later in the day, that young Holloway and a tenderfoot from the States had made a strike in Death Valley, and were going to start a claim.

"You'll want working capital, Harry," said Mr. Hollister, next day after the papers were signed at the mill and the strip of land along the creek became the property of Harry and Rob. "I propose to make you a loan of \$2,000, to be secured by your note. That will give you a good start."

"With my endorsement?" asked Rob. "I don't know whether my father would like to have me endorse a note."

"Wait till I ask it," said Mr. Hollister. "Harry's signature is enough. Your endorsement would lend no extra value to the paper. Read this, young man."

Thus saying, Mr. Hollister took a letter off his desk which had come by the evening mail the day before, and tossed it over to Rob, who turned as pale as death when he read it.

"So my father has failed!" he exclaimed. "Well, well! I expected it a long time ago. Now I've got to hustle for myself, and that's a fact."

He got up and immediately left the mill.

"That's a bad job!" cried Harry. "What am I to do now?"

"Go right ahead, just as though it had never happened," replied Mr. Hollister. "Don't let any man's troubles stand in the way of your success. Now then, Harry, you've got a credit with me for \$2,000 and there is nothing in the way of your—"



making a start. Go in and win, my boy. What I have done for you is only a small return for what you did for me yesterday. When do you propose to begin?"

"At once," replied Harry. "I shall move up to Death Valley to-morrow morning. If I can only get a well man to go with me I shall soon be in shape. Of course we've got to have water before we can do anything great."

"Right. There's a well man in town now. He was in here this morning. Probably you'll find him at the Eureka House. Now, then, I am busy for the rest of the day, but if you want to see me, don't hesitate to call. I'm always ready to talk to you."

Harry took the hint and got out. When he got to the Eureka House the first person he ran into was the well man, who had got wind of what was going on.

"Why, I'll get water for you in Death Valley inside of twenty-four hours after I get my machine going," he declared. "Ten dollars a foot, if Mr. Hollister is backing you. All you've got to do is to say the word, and I'll start right along."

"Be there the first of the week, and it's a go," replied Harry. "You can find out whether you want to trust me or not long before that time."

There was no difficulty on the score of credit with the well driver, or anyone else, however. Mr. Hollister had looked out for that by sending out his clerk while Harry was making his arrangements to let everybody in the street know what the boy proposed to do, and that he was behind the deal. The result was that as Harry went from one place to another he found everyone ready to help him. Everything was now ready for an immediate start, but Rob could not be found, so Harry postponed operations until morning. That night Rob came to his room in the hotel with a telegram in his hand.

"It's all true, Harry," he said. "Father is ruined. I've wired him, and got an answer; he says I had better stay out here and go to work."

"I'm sorry and I'm glad," replied Harry. "We stand on an equal footing now, Rob. Pitch right in, and we'll make a go of it. When shall we start for the valley?"

"Why, I'm ready to start to-morrow morning if you are."

"Let's start to-night. I've tried to keep this thing close, but Mr. Hollister wouldn't have it so, and he's published it everywhere. I suppose that's business. He wants to start a rush into the valley on the other side of the creek line. It will be better for his property, no doubt, but all the same I wish he had let us get to work first."

"Do you think the rush will begin to-morrow morning, Harry?"

"I do. That's why I say let's go out to-night."

"I'm ready to go any time," replied Rob, and it was so arranged.

## CHAPTER XII.—The Rush into Death Valley Begins.

The boys arrived at Death Valley just before daylight, and by the time the sun had risen were fairly established on their new claim.

Harry measured off a hundred feet from the big boulder which marked the beginning of his line, got the tent up and the water barrels in

place, and then proceeded to cook breakfast, for they were both tired and hungry, and needed refreshments before they began their work.

But there was something else to be done in the new camp. Harry felt that he had a duty to perform and he went right about it.

Climbing the hillside, they removed the big stone and having dug a grave, laid the body of Arizona Jake reverently in and covered him up. The body of the superintendent of the North Star had been buried by the authorities the day before.

This over, they returned to the creek and went right to work. There was gold in every shovelful, but this was only surface work. The richness of the sand was supposed to increase as they went down.

"There's gold here, plenty of it," declared Harry, "but we can't tell a thing about it till we begin to wash."

"When are you going to start in washing?" asked Rob. "You must remember this is all new business to me."

"Oh, in an hour or so. When we get sand enough out to make it worth while."

"Do you expect to wash to-day, Harry?"

"Well, I certainly do. I haven't the least doubt we'll get it. I wish Mr. Hollister could have kept quiet and let us alone here, but when I spoke to him about it he only laughed and said it wasn't business. You know he's interested in the big mining supply store at Wickedsburg, Rob, and these rushes boom the business. I tell you, Hollister is right up to date. He wants every cent there is going, and I don't blame him for that either, but there's one thing, no matter how big the work is, I'm going to be the boss of this camp."

"If you can," laughed Rob. "Wait till the gamblers and toughs get in here and we'll see whether you are or not."

"But I will be, and don't you forget it. Know the name of this town?"

"No."

"Either Holloway or Rollins."

"It's Holloway, then—you're bossing me, anyhow. Come, isn't there sand enough here yet? Let's begin to wash."

Harry made no objection, so they set up the rocker and piling the sand in, threw pails of water on it, catching the waste water as it ran out of the mouth of the rocker in a bucket set in a hole in the sand.

It was slow work washing gold under these difficulties, but by one o'clock the sand was all washed over and the enthusiasm of the boys raised to the highest pitch.

Each time the rocker was emptied of its sand there was an accumulation of tiny yellow particles in the bottom, and with each washing the amount seemed to increase.

"It's enormously rich!" declared Harry. "Rob, there's no use talking, our fortunes are made."

"If I can only help father pay his debts, I shall be satisfied," said Rob. "He said in his telegram that he expected to lose the North Star mine with the rest. Wouldn't I like to save it for him! Our line goes up against his. What a triumph it would be if we could only make one mine out of the whole thing!"

"Wait," said Harry. "Let's get out the scales and see what sort of a start we have made."

They had collected quite a little gold dust by



this time, and when Harry put it on the scales, which he had bought for the purpose, it weighed up forty ounces, which was an immense return for a little surface scratching.

"If it keeps up like this we'll be millionaires in two years' time!" exclaimed Harry.

He had hardly spoken when Rob jumped up, crying:

"Hello! There they are! The rush has begun!" He pointed up the valley.

Sure enough, there were eight or ten men on horses riding in advance of an old wagon coming up the valley.

As Mr. Hollister had explained to Harry, the land on the opposite side of the creek line belonged to various owners, most of whom were Eastern men who had never seen the property since the day they came into possession of it.

The newcomer rode straight up to the camp and halted.

"Say, my name is Martin Dill," said the leader. "These here gents is my friends, and we propose to locate right here. How are you fellows making out?"

"Why, we've only just begun," replied Harry, who had carefully concealed his bag of dust before the party came up.

"You've done some digging, and you've done some washing. You'd better answer straight, if you don't want a muss," replied Dill, who was a notorious character, as Harry afterward learned.

"Look here!" cried Harry, laying his hand on his rifle; "do you see that creek line?"

"Do I see it?" growled Dill. "Well, yes, I do see it, and I don't need no boys to help me see it, that's more."

"Get over the other side of it then," cried Harry. "You are on my property."

"Don't care a blame whose property I'm on. I'm going to dig where I blame please. Put up your rifle, or I'll give you a taste of this."

Out came Dill's revolver, and Harry's rifle went to his shoulder.

"Get across the creek!" he said, stoutly. "I'm no tenderfoot! I want you to understand that I'm the boss of this camp, and I'm not agraids of you or any other man alive!"

### CHAPTER XIII.—The Big Boom in Death Valley.

"Drop that gun, Martin Dill! I'm boss of this camp, and I propose to hold my own against all intruders. Do you understand?"

"Say, I don't want no muss," growled Dill. "If this is your claim, why stay on it, and we'll locate elsewhere."

"Come, that's business," replied Harry. "I want to see a big mining camp on this land, but I propose to be the boss, or know the reason why."

"So you said before," responded Dill. "I'm a peaceable man. We are all peaceable men. Show us where your line ends and the public land begins, and there we'll go."

He showed Dill the old creek line and explained to him that it divided the public land from that owned by Mr. Hollister.

"You can stake out claims anywhere over the line," he added, "and I wish you every success."

The newcomers pitched their tents across the

dry creek and next morning each man staked out his claim.

The first thing Harry did was to paint on a piece of board:

"This is the town of Holloway," He and Rob had tossed up a silver dollar the night before to determine for which the new camp should be named.

It came down heads and that meant Harry, so the sign was nailed to a stake driven in the sand, all of which being accomplished, the boys went to work digging again.

Across the creek Martin Dill and his friends struck pay dirt in one or two places, but having no water could not wash, so it was impossible to say how rich a find they had made.

Water was carried in from Rodman's creek, and washing went on daily.

Everywhere the sand was found to contain gold. In some places there was a lot of it, in others only a trace, but nowhere was it any richer than on the Holloway & Rollins claim as the boys named their mine.

Inside of a month the new town of Holloway was in full boom. Shanties began going up in every direction. Stores, gambling saloons, dance houses and gin mills were started all along the creek, but at the very beginning Harry Holloway took hold with a firm hand.

He made friends rapidly, and some enemies, of course. At the end of the first week a regular town was organized, and Harry was elected mayor, while Martin Dill, who had struck it rich at the start and was now Harry's firm friend in consequence, was chosen constable.

Holloway & Rollins had a fine artesian well on their claim now, and there was another across the creek.

The waste water was run into the creek, and the old dry bed became a swiftly running stream below the wells.

This water was used for gold washing all along the line, each claim owner paying a small tax for the privilege, which money went to meet the expenses of the rapidly growing town.

"The only thing you've got to look out for, my boy, is that you don't get a case of the big head," said Mr. Hollister, when Harry came to make his second payment. "Go on as you have begun and you will undoubtedly become a rich man, but if you get to thinking too much of yourself there's no telling where it will all end."

"I don't intend to do that, sir, you can be very sure," laughed Harry. "I know that such strikes as we have made don't come once in a lifetime. I'm going to hold on to what I've got and work it for all it is worth."

"You'll have me down there in about a month," said Mr. Hollister. "I'm going to start up a claim next to yours, and see what I can make in Death Valley. Look out for me, young man."

Harry left the mill office and started up Main street toward the hotel, where he proposed to get supper.

No one can blame him for feeling rather proud of his success.

He now stood at the head of one of the most prosperous mining camps in New Mexico, when only a few short weeks before he had entered this same town of Wickedsburg a poor boy.

He was thinking of all these things and wonder-



ing how Rob was getting along down at the mine, when all at once a young girl stepped up to him, saying:

"How do you do, Mr. Holloway? Have you forgotten me?"

"Why, it's Jennie Mills!" cried Harry, shaking hands. "As though I could ever forget you! How are things with you, Jennie? Has your father got anything to do yet? Do you know I was going to look him up right away after supper. I want such a man to help me over in Death Valley. Perhaps you may have heard that I'm running a mine there now?"

"I know all about it," replied Jennie, hurriedly. "Mr. Holloway, I must speak with you. I've got something very important to say."

"Hello! What's the matter now, Jennie?" Harry asked. "Remember I've got a first name, and you needn't call me anything else. You look scared half to death. Nothing wrong with your father, I hope."

"Yes, there is, Harry," replied the girl earnestly. "Father doesn't work now. He never will again. It's nothing but drinking and gambling all the time. Oh, Harry, I am so wretched. I can't begin to tell you. But we mustn't be seen talking here. Can't you meet me up by the old bridge at midnight? Our bridge, you know. Don't say no! You must do it. I've got something most important to say."

"Why certainly I can, if you wish it, Jennie," replied Harry; "but tell me——"

"Ask me nothing—nothing now," replied the girl earnestly, and she turned and hurried through the door which led up over Dyball's saloon.

#### CHAPTER XIV.—A Useless Warning.

What in the world can Jennie mean?" thought our young miner, as he sat at supper in the hotel that evening, and the thought occurred to him again and again as the hours were on, and it made him somewhat uneasy, it must be admitted.

Down in Death Valley there were not more than fifty men all told upon whom Harry could count in case of an emergency.

He knew that out of the hundred or more beside those who went to make up the camp, there were many who were very jealous of his success, and who altogether resented his title to be called the "boss of the camp."

"Perhaps it's a plot to down me," he thought, and the reflection made him so uneasy that he went out and visited one gambling saloon after another, watching the games, but not taking any part in them, for although our hero was by no means perfect, gambling was not once of his vices.

He had dozens of invitations to drink and as many more to play, but he declined them all, and growing tired of it, went back to the hotel, and at last walked out to the bridge where the memorable fight with the toughs had taken place, which, it will be remembered, was but a short distance out of town.

"I wonder what on earth Jennie can want," he kept saying to himself as he walked along under the towering cliffs. "It must be something mighty important, or she would not have been so serious about it."

A little further on he came to the bridge, which had now been restored to its original condition.

Here he paused, his attention being instantly attracted by a light flashing along the trail ahead.

It was there one instant and gone the next, but Harry could not help thinking that it had been thrown upon him, and he was hurrying across the bridge to see what it meant when Jennie suddenly stepped out from behind a projecting rock and stood directly in his path.

"Oh, Harry, I'm so glad you have come!" she exclaimed; "but I'm afraid it is too late!"

"Too late for what, Jennie? What does all this mystery mean?" demanded Harry, eagerly. "Was that you with the lantern? I see you have one in your hand."

"Yes, I put it out. We may be watched. They are gone, Harry. I understand that they were to meet at midnight, and I wanted you to be here so that you could listen to their talk. They mean to ruin you—to kill you if necessary. That man Barney is at the bottom of it, and he is using my father for a tool."

"But I don't understand, Jennie. What can they do to me? What good would it do them to kill me? Barney claims that I was the cause of his brother's death, I know, and it may be revenge on his part, but——"

"It isn't that!" broke in Jennie. "I don't understand it myself, but it is something to do with your claim. These men met at our house last week. They have met several times since, and the talk is all about downing you. Then Barney got a big gang of toughs together from all over this region, and they've been camping here in Little Sink. To-morrow was the day set for whatever it is they mean to do, but the horses are all gone, and there is no one here, so I think they must have changed their plans and started off to-night. Come this way, Harry, and I'll show you where they were."

Then Harry learned something about the canyon that he had never known before, for Jennie led the way around the point of rocks and showed him a narrow opening in the towering wall hardly big enough for a mounted man to pass through.

Lighting the lantern now, she hurried on, coming out in a moment into a small sink, or what would have been a cave if it had a roof.

The stars were shining above them the rocks were all around them, and there on the ground were the remains of a fire and traces of horses.

Harry now questioned Jennie more closely, but did not succeed in learning anything definite of the nature of the plot against his camp.

"Well, I'm ever and ever so much obliged to you for what you tried to do for me," Harry said, as he parted with the brave girl at her own door. "Keep your eyes and ears open, Jennie, and if you hear or see anything that you think I ought to know, don't fail to let me hear from you. I shall not forget the interest you have shown in me."

Then it was "good night," and Harry hurriedly saddled his horse and started for Holloway.

He was heavily armed and ready for an emergency.

Not one boy in ten thousand would have ventured to ride over that lonely trail in the dead of night knowing what he knew, but Harry was not afraid. At a little before five o'clock he rode up to his shanty and Rob sprang out of his bunk to open the door for him.



"Any news?" asked Harry.

"No, nothing that I know of," was the reply. "What on earth brought you over the trail in the night? Has anything gone wrong?"

Harry told his story while putting his horse up, and Rob was as much mystified as he was. But there was no explanation of the mystery that day or next. The boys worked on steadily. They now had half a dozen men employed sinking a shaft on the line of their claim, from which Harry proposed to run drifts right and left, thinking that they could easily get the underlying gold deposit by that method.

Harry was in the shaft almost all the time during working hours, for there was more or less gold showing, and he preferred to keep an eye on it.

He was busy at his work on the afternoon of the third day following his return from Wickedsburg, when Rob's voice was suddenly heard calling:

"Oh, Harry! I wish you'd come up! There's a man here who wants to see you, and I can't make out what he is after."

Harry got into the tub, gave the signal and was hoisted up.

A big, heavily bearded fellow, who had ridden up on horseback, stood leaning against the door post.

"Howdy," he said, gruffly. "Are you Harry Holloway, the fellow they call the boss of this yer camp?"

"I am. What do you want?" Harry replied, eyeing the stranger with a good deal of suspicion.

At the same time he saw a great number of mounted men riding into the camp.

They were strangers, every one of them, and an ill-looking lot besides.

"This is a strike!" flashed across Harry's mind instantly.

"What do you want?" he repeated, for the big man stood staring without saying a word.

"You!" cried the fellow, suddenly dealing Harry a stunning blow between the eyes which sent him tumbling back upon the sand like a log.

It was a bold move, for there stood Rob and two workmen right in front of him. The other four men were down in the shaft.

"Whoever raises a hand to interfere with me dies!" shouted the stranger, whipping out a revolver and firing at Rob, who fell wounded in the shoulder.

The two men ducked and ran for their lives.

Evidently the shot was a signal, for at the same instant firing began across the creek.

## CHAPTER XV.—A Raid on the Camp.

Harry was not knocked out by any means. He simply lost his footing and fell.

All in an instant he realized his danger, and to remain boss of the camp he must show himself master of the situation then.

If the boy had been a fool he would have jumped up and tackled his burly antagonist, but being nothing of the sort, Harry lay perfectly still and waited for the man's next move.

The fellow stepped up and was in the act of bending down over Harry when our hero, who had a pair of arms as strong as iron, suddenly seized

him by the ankles and pulled his legs from under him, tumbling the man over backward.

"Help here, boys! Help!" he shouted, throwing himself upon the man, jamming his knee into the pit of the fellow's stomach and winding him in short order.

The two miners ran to his assistance.

Rob, who had received nothing worse than a flesh wound, was on his feet in an instant, and at Harry's side.

"Don't kill me! Don't kill me!" panted the tough.

"You ought to be shot!" cried Harry. "I'll settle you later, though. Tie him up, boys! Tie him in the hut! Get the fellows out of the shaft! Follow me across the creek. This is a raid to clean us out, but I'll show them that I'm boss of the camp."

He sprang into the hut, seized his rifle and vaulted upon the stranger's horse.

"Stay where you are, Rob!" he shouted. "You're in no shape to follow me!" and off he dashed across the creek.

There was lively business going on over there.

Fully fifty mounted men were dashing along the street, firing into the stores and shouting like mad. Looking up the valley, Harry could see as many more tearing down toward the camp.

It was a well-organized raid, made with the deliberate intention of capturing the camp, and running off all the gold to be got at.

Harry saw this at a glance, and realized that he was powerless to stop it as matters stood.

Harry turned his horse back across the creek and sprang from the saddle at the door of the hut where Rob and the six men stood staring over at the camp in silent dismay.

"It's up with us, boss," said Sam Pendergast, one of the miners. "We'd better light out."

"Not while I'm boss of the camp do I give up," answered Harry between his set teeth. "Get out the horses, boys! We'll make a move. Of course we've got to light out now, but these fellows will see me back again, don't you fear."

Not a moment was lost in saddling the horses. Rob did his share, for he was not much hurt.

By this time the toughs had swept from one end of Main Street to the other.

They had been joined by fully fifty of the miners, and now the boys could see them looking across the creek.

"Here they come!" cried Rob.

"That's what's the matter," replied Harry, calmly. "Mount." All sprang into the saddle.

"Let her go! Follow me, boys!" was the next order.

Off they dashed up the valley.

A shower of shots flew after them.

Twenty or more men started in pursuit, some jumping their horses over the creek, others riding back above the wells where the bed was dry, with the evident intention of heading Harry's party off.

Meanwhile the hundred or more miners and store-keepers, gamblers and idlers who had fled from the camp were gathering at the foot of the hills which shut in the valley on the other side.

"There are our friends. We must join them, if we die for it!" cried Harry, turning his horse abruptly toward the dry bed of the upper creek.

"We can never get there alive," gasped Rob. "They'll head us off sure."

"Shan't we open fire, boss?" asked Sam Pen-



dergast. "Do you mean to ride right into the teeth of the enemy and let them have it all their own way?"

"Save your powder till it can be of some use," replied Harry coolly.

He dashed on, followed closely by his little band. On came the toughs behind them.

"Head them off, boys!" shouted Barney who was in the lead, calling to the party coming up the creek. "That chap ahead is the one we want. Shoot him down!"

"Halt!" cried Harry, suddenly reining in.

Every horse came to a standstill.

"Fire!" shouted Harry, throwing up his rifle.

It was eight against at least thirty, but not one hesitated.

Eight rifles spoke then, and eight shots went flying at the enemy, now not more than a dozen yards away.

## CHAPTER XVI.—Knocked Out.

"Fire! Wipe 'em out! Now is our time, boys! Don't let one of them escape!"

Encouraging his little band, Harry blazed away at the party which was trying to head him off, and then suddenly swinging around, turned his rifle back toward Barney and his gang, and gave them a dose, too.

Rob fought bravely, firing first forward and then back with a steady hand, and each one of the men who had accompanied the boys displayed an equal amount of courage, but there was something more than courage needed here.

"It's no use, boss!" cried Sam Pendergast. "They are too many for us. We've got to light out or be wiped out, one of the two."

"Not on your life! I'll never give up!" cried Harry firing still.

At the same moment a shot from Barney's rifle took the brave boy in the left shoulder.

Harry reeled and fell over alongside his horse, who frightened by feeling the boy's body come against him, started off at a furious pace, and flew up the valley like the wind.

At the same instant Rob's horse was shot dead under him, and the next the boy knew he was rolling in the sand.

It was all up now.

Pendergast and his companions threw up their hands and surrendered.

The last Rob saw of Harry he was still hanging over alongside his horse, dashing up the valley.

On he dashed to the mouth of the valley, where the trail divides, one branch going to Wickedsburg and the other to Manning by the way of the North Star mine.

Harry held on for dear life.

He could hear the shouts of his pursuers behind him, and he expected nothing else than to be overtaken and shot, when the horse suddenly turned off into the side trail leading up to the mine.

He was now out of sight of his pursuers, and they for some reason thought he had gone ahead on the Manning trail, while actually he was being hurried on toward the North Star.

His strength was fast failing.

Once more he made an effort to pull himself up into the saddle, and then his strength left him and

he fainted and fell to the trail while the horse continued his wild dash toward the mine.

Meanwhile, Rob had escaped also, for the toughs flying past him, and headed by Barney, rode over to the hill where the fugitives had gathered.

He peered out from behind the mesquite bushes and could see that Barney and his men had dismounted and were having some sort of pow-wow. Afterward he learned what it all meant.

"Now, gentlemen," said Barney, on that occasion, "I'm a peaceable man, and I don't want no muss. Return to your shanties and get back to work. The mine over the other side of the creek which was opened by that there young Holloway belongs to me and six other gents. We hold the papers to prove our claim, and we are going to work it, and won't stand no interference from no man. That's all. I don't want to interfere with no man's business, but I want every one here to understand that our claim against that there mine is a good one. From this time forward I'm the boss of this yer camp."

Barney had been working the matter up for some weeks, and now having reached a point in the proceedings where he deemed it safe to make a move, he had boldly run Harry and Rob off their claim and taken possession.

Barney exhibited certain formidable-looking legal papers and they yielded.

All hands returned to their work, and that night was one of riot and confusion.

Before midnight there were three shooting scrapes, and in one of them six men were shot dead.

At half-past one Bentzeman's saloon was set on fire by a tough who threw a lighted lamp at another in a quarrel over cards, and was burned to the ground, taking the Golden Eagle restaurant and three miners' huts with it.

Altogether it was a dreadful night, and one which the miners long remembered. There were many who heartily wished the boy boss of the camp back again, for many such nights now followed.

Startling news reached the camp.

Mr. Hollister had fallen dead in his office the day before the raid, and his affairs were found to be in hopeless confusion.

Barney and his associates filed their claims and organized under the name of the Death Valley Mining Company.

As many as sixty small claims were staked out on the east side of the creek and given to Barney's friends, most of whom started right in to dig for gold.

So the days wore on, and a week passed.

Nothing was heard of the boys, and Barney, who ran things with a high hand, came to be generally acknowledged as the boss of the camp.

## CHAPTER XVII.—One Week Later.

The last thing Harry remembered was when he felt everything slipping away from him and knew that he could no longer hold on to the horse.

The next he knew he was lying on a heap of straw in a small room, feeling as weak as a baby and with no disposition to exert himself in the least.



It was quite dark in the room, but Harry could see that it was just a rough affair made of old boards with light streaming in through the cracks here and there.

He lay still for a while, pondering, the recollection of all that had occurred coming back to him.

The next he knew he was waking up again and there was Jennie Mills seated by his side; he could see her face plainly in the light thrown by a reflecting lantern which hung suspended from a beam overhead.

"Why, Jennie! What brought you here!" he exclaimed, sitting up. "What has been the matter with me? Where am I? Oh, I feel so strange!"

"Hush!" breathed Jennie. "Don't talk so loud. They've come! They are going to work to-night. Oh, I do wish Rob was here!"

Jennie seemed as much excited as Harry was puzzled. Our hero began putting eager questions, but before Jennie had time to answer, quick footsteps were heard outside and Rob burst into the room.

"They are all here again, Jennie!" he whispered. "Shall I—oh, Harry! You've come to yourself at last!"

Rob dropped on his knees beside the straw and almost cried for joy.

"Why, it's a whole week!" he exclaimed. "We gave you up one time, Jennie and I. There she is, Harry. There's the brave girl who saved your life!"

It appeared that Jennie, hearing of the raid, started for the camp to warn the boys, but missing her way, had got on to the North Star trail.

She discovered her blunder and was just turning off to go to Death Valley, when Harry's horse came dashing past her, and a little later she came upon our hero lying unconscious on the ground, bleeding from a wound in the left shoulder, and severely bruised about the head by his fall.

It was she who extracted the bullet with no better surgical implement than a penknife.

It was Jennie who got the poor boy unassisted onto her horse and brought him to the North Star and actually managed to get him up into the loft above the tool house.

Then Rob came and lent a helping hand. For a week poor Harry lay raving with fever nursed by these two devoted friends.

There was no doctor in Wickedsburg nor in Manning, so they had to do the best they could themselves.

Fortunately, there was plenty of provisions in the storehouse at the mine, so there was no trouble on that score, and now Harry had been nursed back to life again and here he was listening to the story of Barney's doings in Death Valley.

While Rob was explaining Jennie left the room, and when she returned she could scarcely wait to hear Harry's thankful words for what she had done.

"We can't talk now," she whispered. "Listen, Harry. My father is here with some of the worst toughs belonging to Barney's gang. Since you have been sick they have been here twice before, and yet they have never found out that we were hiding in this room. Can you stay alone, Harry? Rob and I have got to watch them. Don't ask me to tell you now what it is all about. You have done altogether too much talking as it is. We won't be gone very long."

"I'll go, too," said Harry, starting to get up. "Don't think of it!" exclaimed Rob.

"If you insist on trying it I shall stay here and hold you down in the straw," added Jennie, emphatically. "Now, do be good, Harry. This is a very important matter, and it concerns Rob more than it does you."

"All right," said Harry, quietly. "You two go on. I'll behave."

They were gone in a moment.

Harry listened. He could hear voices talking in the distance outside the tool house.

"What does it all mean?" he thought. "Well, I've heard enough to set my head spinning, but not enough to satisfy me. I want to know all."

Suddenly there was a shout outside.

"A spy! A spy!" some one cried.

Then a rifle was fired and Harry could hear several persons running past the tool house.

"I'm not going to stand this, not if I know it," he thought.

He was dressed all but his shoes, and these lay near the straw.

With a great effort he managed to get them on and then seizing his hat which hung on a nail above his head he staggered toward the door.

It was the first time in the boy's life that he had ever been really afraid.

It seemed to him as if the floor was falling away from under his feet.

"Brace up, Holloway," he muttered, clutching at the partition for support.

In a moment he was himself again, and opening the door, he staggered down the stairs.

There was another door here, and Harry opened it and peered out into the darkness.

He had barely time to close it again to avoid being discovered.

Four men were coming toward the tool house.

"I am sure I saw some one shinning around the corner of the shaft house," he heard one say, "but I must have been mistaken. Now, then, boys, I'm prepared to give the secret away. The North Star mine is played out, they say. It's going to be sold next week at auction, on account of old man Rollins' creditors. Ha! ha! If they knew what I know they'd never sell it. Say, there's a million dollars in sight in the west drift. I know it, 'cause I covered it up myself. Come on, now. Rollins wouldn't answer my letters and wouldn't listen to me. Neither would old Hollister. I called on him the day before he died, and tried to make him understand, but you fellows shall——"

The voice died away in the distance, while Harry, trembling from head to foot with excitement and weakness, opened the door and stole out.

"Jennie is right. This is Rob's business," he muttered. "Well, if I can't be boss of the camp I can save the North Star from these sharks, and I'll do it, too."

#### CHAPTER XVIII.—Strange Discoveries in the Drift.

It was now quite dark, and Harry was just able to see the men enter the shaft house, where he had met Arizona Jake when he made the stand against Barney and his gang.

"The west drift! The west drift!" he kept saying to himself. "That must be the drift that leads out into Death Valley. I only wish I could get



over the hill and find out what they mean to do." He staggered on, hardly knowing what he intended to do himself, and what he did do was to run right into Rob and Jennie, who came out from behind the shaft house where they had been hiding as they saw him approach.

"Harry, what in the world! Didn't you promise?" whispered Rob.

"Couldn't do it," answered Harry. "I must be in it—no use talking. Say, I've heard enough to tell me what those fellows who have just gone down the shaft are driving at. Jennie—Rob—do you know?"

"That man who did the talking was my father," replied Jennie. "Yes, I know. He made a big discovery in one of the drifts and it turned his head. He has never been the same man since."

"Who are the others?" asked Harry, instinctively taking the lead in the affair now.

"I don't know," replied Jennie. "They are strangers in Wicksburg. One is a Santa Fe lawyer, I believe; the others belong to Barney's gang. There's going to be an auction here next week, and I think they have some idea of buying the mine. They are desperate enough, anyhow. Did you hear them fire at Rob? They came near discovering us. I'm sure I don't know what to do."

"Well, I do, then," said Harry, promptly. "Rob, your father's interests are involved here. We want to know all about this secret. What's to hinder us from going into the drift and finding it out?"

"You can't do anything, Harry. It is as much as your life is worth. What you want to do is to get well, and then we'll make a move on our old camp in Death Valley. I want to see you the boss there again."

"And I propose to be, and don't you forget it, Rob; but that's not to-night's work. I'm getting stronger every moment. Have you a horse here?"

"Yes, two of them. The one you rode that night, and Jennie's. They are around on the Death Valley trail, hidden among some rocks."

"Then I'll ride around on the other side of the mountain and go into the drift," said Harry, emphatically. "It won't take us twenty minutes to get there, once we are on the horses. Who's with me? I'm going if I have to go alone."

There was no such thing as stopping him. Rob and Jennie just had to yield.

Rob and Harry rode one and Jennie the other. Harry was behind holding on to Rob, and he really managed much better than might have been expected.

They rode around to the other side of the hill, and came out in full sight of the camp.

"There it is!" cried Harry, looking down at the twinkling lights. "Never mind! I've got it in for that fellow Barney. He's having his day now, but my turn will come again. I'll be boss of that camp yet."

They rode on in silence, and were soon almost up to the big stone which closed in the end of the west drift of the North Star.

Here they dismounted and hurried to the spot. Rob and Jennie cautiously removed the stone and then drew hastily back, half expecting to get a shot. A rush of foul air came out of the drift. Peering in, they could see a dim light ahead, but they could not hear a sound.

"Strange!" murmured Harry. "There's the lights; they must be there."

"Let's creep ahead and see how the land lays," answered Rob.

He had scarcely spoken when a huge piece of rock was heard falling in the drift.

"A cave-in!" said Harry. "Come on! That means mischief. I wonder—"

He did not finish his sentence, but with something like his old energy hurried into the drift.

Rob and Jennie followed.

"Look out! Look out, Harry. Do be careful!" breathed Rob. But something seemed to tell Harry that he had nothing to fear.

As he advanced toward the light he saw that it proceeded from a lantern standing on the floor of the drift.

A few further and he knew that his suspicions were correct.

The way was blocked by a heap of rocks which had come tumbling down from above.

Under the heap a man's leg projected; just beyond was an arm, and beyond that another leg.

"Caught in the cave-in, every one of them!" exclaimed Harry, seizing the lantern and flashing it about.

"Oh, my poor father!" screamed Jennie, rushing forward.

"He's past all help if he's under those rocks," said Harry, gently. "Oh, Rob! Look here!"

Flashing the lantern against the left wall of the drift, Harry disclosed a wonderful sight.

The rock was fairly bristling with tiny points which flashed back the light with a yellow gleam. It was gold.

Immense quantities of it.

Gold lying so thick in the quartz that you could not put a pin's point between the particles.

"This means millions, Rob!" gasped Harry. "It's our secret now! I tell you what it is, old man, come what will, we must run this mine!"

## CHAPTER XIX.—Harry Makes Up His Mind to Go It Alone.

The thought of the wonderful discovery they had made did more to restore Harry Holloway's wasted strength than all the medicine in the world could have done.

The enthusiasm of the boys was aroused to the biggest pitch, but they were somewhat saddened, of course, by the sorrow which had come upon Jennie Mills.

Jennie, however bore up bravely, and took altogether a common-sense view of the affair.

"Don't worry about me," she said. "My father was not a good man, nor was he ever a good father to me. He came here with these men plotting to get the North Star for a low price at the auction sale, when it was his duty to report the discovery he had made to the superintendent of the mine at the time he made it. He would have shot either of you boys without mercy if you had stood in his way."

"That's all very true," replied Rob, "but we can't leave those poor fellows here. Their bodies must be removed."

"And expose our discovery!" put in Harry. "Remember, Rob, the biggest part of this mine belongs to your father. What we want to do is to



buy it in at the auction and save it from the sharks who would rob him. Can we do that if we expose our hand?"

Jennie came bravely to the front then. "No, you mustn't," she said. "These bodies must be left just as they are until after the sale."

"It isn't necessary," replied Harry. "What I propose is this: There are plenty of greenhorns passing through Manning all the time, men who don't know gold in the rock when they see it. You and Jennie go over there, Rob, and hire three or four of them; bring them here and we'll remove the bodies and keep the men by us until after the sale."

"But you can't go, Harry, and we can't leave you alone."

"You must leave me alone. I'm all right. I say go."

"But the money to pay them? We haven't a cent."

"Leave that to me. I have a friend here in the mountains. Never you fear."

As soon as they had departed the boy did the most sensible thing he could have done under the circumstances. Banishing all thought of fear, he lay down just inside the mouth of the drift and slept until morning, waking up greatly refreshed and almost like his old self again. After bathing his face in a stream of water which trickled down from the rocks inside the drift, Harry went out into the open and took a long look down into Death Valley. There did not seem to very much work going on down there in the camp.

"And to think that I have been driven out of my own camp, the camp that I made and built up," thought the boy, bitterly. "It's a shame! It's all I can do to stand it! I won't stand it. I'm going down there. I'll show them that I'm not afraid. Come what will, I'll be boss of that camp yet."

He wondered if there had been any removal of gold from his mine yet. If not, there might still be time to save what he had worked so hard for.

"I'm going to do it now!" he exclaimed at last. "Rob and Jennie can hardly be back before tomorrow. If they could return to find me boss of the camp it would be a big thing."

He hastily scrawled a note to Rob on a leaf of his memorandum book, tore it out and put it on the rocks just inside the drift with a stone upon it, placed in such a way that it would surely be seen.

Then he put the big stone in place and started down the hill toward the camp.

The first claim that he struck was one which had been taken up by a man named Jerry Brown, who was digging in a trench which he was running down to the creek.

"Good-morning, Jerry," said our hero, cheerfully.

Jerry looked up, dropped his pick and sprang out of the trench.

"Why blame it all, it's the little boss!" he cried. "Good heavens, where did you drop from? How did you dare to come here? That fellow Barney has sworn to do you up at sight. If you go up into the camp you are as good as dead."

"Am I?" replied Harry. "Well, I'm not afraid."

"You have a right to be, then, but I'll be

hanged if I believe you are. Boss, I admire your nerve."

"Look here, Jerry," replied Harry, sitting down on the sand, "you have called me boss two or three times now. Do you admit that I am still boss of this camp?"

"Indeed I do! Who is if you hain't? I wish to goodness you was back here among us now."

"And I intend to come back, Jerry. Will you help me?"

"You bet I will."

"Yet you held back when the fight was on the other day."

"I've changed my mind since then, boss, and so has lots more of the fellows. Barney has been running things with a high hand. It's nothing but drinking and gambling and shooting scrapes from morning till night."

"Where's Barney now?"

"Likely he and Mart Dill are playing poker in Sam Pitman's saloon; they most always are."

"How about my mine; are they working it?"

"Pretending to; they don't do much, though."

"Has any of the gold been moved into Wickedsburg?"

"Not on your life. They've got your big wagon packed full of it, but they don't dare to strike Wickedsburg yet a while. I think they are waiting to see if you'll turn up again. Too bad about Hollister. If he'd a lived he'd have put the kibosh on these fellows sure."

"Then he's really dead?" sighed Harry.

"Oh, yes, he's dead fast enough, but the mill is running just the same. Where have you been, boss? What are you going to do about it all, anyhow? Count upon me to help you any way I can."

"Is that a go, Jerry?"

"It is, boss."

"Shake on it, then."

They shook hands and Jerry Brown was not at all the sort of fellow to go back on a man after that.

"Tell me," said Harry, "do you think that if I was to ride into camp the boys would rally around me?"

"Do I think so? I know so!" cried Jerry. "There would be the greatest getting up you ever seen. But 'tain't no use, boss; you'd never reach the other end of the camp alive."

"Wouldn't I? We'll see about that. Lend me your horse and a revolver, Jerry, and I'll try it!" Harry cried.

"You can have the loan of anything I own and welcome, boss, but—"

"No buts, Jerry. Quick! Get up and tell the boys that I'm coming. I'm bound to do it. I'll show Barney and his crew that I'm still boss of the camp."

## CHAPTER XX.—The Boldest Dash on Record.

Harry Holloway fully realized the danger of the step which he was about to take.

"That wagonload of gold belongs to me and my partner and I propose to run it over to the Wickedsburg mill," he said to himself as he proceeded to saddle the horse, which Jerry kept in a little lean-to behind his shanty. "If I'm killed that settles it. If I succeed, my troubles are all over, for then these fellows will fight for me to the last gasp."



He was glad, however, that he was alone.

Rob was a poor fighter at the best and Harry felt that he had far rather go into the battle with the toughs single-handed, but he could not help feeling sorry for Rob's situation in case he should be killed.

"He'll just have to get out of the country. He can never put the mine deal through himself," he thought. "Perhaps it was rather shabby for me to start in on this thing until he came back, but I am started now for better or for worse, so here goes."

He vaulted into the saddle and rode boldly out in plain sight of the camp.

As he dashed along over the sand toward the next claim, which was about an eighth of a mile distant, Harry felt perfectly well and ready for any exertion, which only goes to show what determination can do.

"Hey, Bill Leggett! Are you with me or against me?" shouted Harry, as he dashed up to the shanty.

"With you every time, boss!" cried a big, bearded man who came running out.

"Follow me, then!"

Bill leaped upon his horse, which stood ready saddled at the door and on they dashed to the next claim. There was no response here. Evidently Jerry had failed with this man. There were two other shanties before they reached the beginning of the street, which ran along the line of the creek. Harry got three recruits out of these and his old friend Sam Pendergast proved to be one of them. They had their horses all ready, but Harry did not wait for them to mount.

"Back me up, boys!" he cried. "I'm going to make my dash now."

"Hold up! Let's all go together, boss!" said Sam. "By gum, unless we cover you there isn't one chance in a hundred that you can go through it alive."

"Come on!" cried Harry. "This is a lone hand, boys, and I'm going to win the game. Never you fear!"

Then followed that famous dash, which for many a long day the miners of Death Valley did not forget.

"I'm boss of this camp. Who's with me? Who's against me?" shouted Harry, as he spurred his horse along the street.

His friends were ready for him. Jerry Brown had done his work well. Men came flocking out of the stores, saloons and gambling rooms as Harry went flying by shouting:

"Arm yourselves! Stand by me! Down with the toughs! Let's run them out of camp!"

"Three cheers for the boss!" they shouted. "Hooray for Harry Holloway! Three cheers for the boss of the camp!"

But this was only part of the fun. The firing began instantly. The men who came tumbling out upon the street were not all friends of the boss by any means. A dozen revolvers were aimed at the brave boy and as many shots flew past his head, but Harry reserved his fire for closer quarters. On he flew, leaving behind him a trail of friends and foes struggling for the mastery. As the toughs appeared they were fired at and they in turn fired back at their enemies. Shots and wild shouts rang out the whole length of the street, but the worst was yet to come, for

Pitman's saloon was right ahead now and Harry knew what he had to expect there. Out came Barney, Martin Dill and half a dozen of their followers, alarmed by the outcry.

"Burning blue blazes! It's that young devil again!" bawled Barney. "Is he mad or what's the matter with him?"

He ran out into the middle of the road, and, raising his rifle, fired at Harry as he came dashing on, followed by a howling mob of miners, all ready and willing to back the brave boy up in the struggle which they knew must come. The shot was a miss. Instantly Barney fired another.

"Hooray for Harry Holloway!" bawled the miners.

"Bang! Bang!" Harry's revolver had spoken.

Barney gave a sharp cry, dropped his rifle and fell wounded in the road.

## CHAPTER XXI—Trouble on the Trail.

"Bang! Bang Bang!"

The Boss of the Camp was out for business—that was certain. Harry Holloway was the boy to make the feathers fly once he got started, and he was right in it now. Martin Dill got it in the arm and fell back. Bill Pachei picked up a shot in the hip and Charley Jacques and Ed Ramsey each got one in the side. Serious business this proved to be for some of them, but strange to say no one was killed. Then the crowd of miners closed around the toughs and the big fight was soon over.

"Kill 'em! Kill 'em! Shoot 'em as they run!" yelled one and another, for the toughs were in full retreat.

But Harry had had enough. He made a most plucky fight and he had won.

"No more, boys. Stop firing, now!" he shouted. "Let them go and if they ever return to this camp I'll not be the one to stand between them and the fate they so richly deserve."

Some were inclined not to listen, but Jerry Thomas, Sam Pendergast and others joined in with Harry and order was soon restored. The last they saw of the toughs they were retreating up the valley, plodding over the sand on foot, for there had been no time to get their horses. Even Barney had disappeared. As he was not seen to leave with the others, it was supposed that he sneaked away somewhere, and no particular effort was made to look for him, for our hero, mounting the steps of Pitman's saloon, was making a speech and all hands wanted to hear him. Every one wanted to shake hands and almost all got the chance. Then it wound up by Harry standing treat all around, although he drank nothing himself.

"By gum, it's a big triumph for you, boss, but you deserved it," remarked Sam Pendergast, coming over to the Holloway & Rollins mine across the creek later in the morning. "You deserve it, though. There isn't one in a thousand who would have dared to do what you done. Say, what's on the program next?"

There was the gold packed in the big wagon all ready for transportation to the mill at Wickedburg as soon as Barney felt it safe to move it. The next thing on the program con-



sequently was to get it over there as soon possible, and, although he hated to leave the camp so soon after his triumph, Harry started that very afternoon, accompanied by Sam Pendergast and a dozen men. The run over the mountain was made in safety and about eight o'clock that evening the heavily loaded team drew up before the door of the Wickedsburg mill without any adventure being met with on the way. Here Harry learned the particulars of Mr. Hollister's sudden death from Superintendent Brasier.

"Did he say anything about me?" he asked.

"Not a word," was the reply. "He fell at his desk and never spoke to anybody, although he lived for an hour afterward. It was heart disease, the doctor said, but whatever it was it came mighty sudden. Will you stay over, Mr. Holloway? I'll weigh up that stuff in the morning. I can't very well do it tonight."

"No," replied Harry. "I must get right back to camp. Let me have a thousand dollars on account, Mr. Brasier; you can hold the rest subject to my order."

Mr. Brasier readily consented, but when Harry left the mill he found that if he persisted in his determination to return to Death Valley that night he had to go alone, for every one of his companions, Sam Pendergast included, had started in on a big spree. Harry saw at once that it was utterly useless to try to check them, so he pulled away after a little while and went to the hotel and had his supper, after which he mounted his horse and started back on his lonely ride alone. Not for worlds would he have waited over, for it was more than probable that Rob and Jennie would reach the North Star by midnight, and as Harry did not feel at all sure that they would find the letter in the dark, he knew what their anxiety would be.

"It's a big risk, but I've got to take it," he thought, as he rode along. "I may have been watched from the start; they may be following me now, but it's rather late in the day to show the white feather. I'll let them see that I'm not afraid."

He rode on bravely, whistling to keep himself company, and nothing had occurred by the time he reached the turn off, where the side trail led over to the North Star mine.

"I may as well go over there first," thought Harry. "If Rob and Jennie are back I haven't the least doubt they'll be waiting for me down by the drift, for they can't know that the toughs have been driven out of camp."

He turned his horse aside and dashed on between the rocky walls of the canyon until he came to the place where the left wall ended abruptly and a precipice took its place, with Badman's Creek running at its foot.

He was dashing on, when all at once something struck his throat with fearful force.

A rope had been stretched across the trail from the rocks on one side to a tree which grew on the edge of the precipice on the other.

This did the business.

In an instant poor Harry was unhorsed.

He struck the trail with fearful force, six men springing up around him, all heavily armed.

"It's the boy! We've got him fast enough!" cried one, flashing a lantern upon him.

They certainly had.

Harry lay silent and motionless.

"Chuck him over into the creek," said the man with the lantern, bending down and looking at him.

"He'll never bother us no more. He's dead!"

## CHAPTER XXII.—How Harry Met Bob's Father.

"Chuck him over!" cried the man with the lantern again as the others hesitated. "Chuck him over into the creek! He's dead, but he'll be sure to come to life again and we can never do nothing down there in the Death Valley camp while this fellow is around."

They all agreed that it would be a difficult job for any one of their number to make much headway in Death Valley while the Boss of the Camp still lived.

So they caught up poor Harry and threw him over the precipice without even a thought of mercy.

It was a drop of a hundred feet and over and Badman's Creek ran like a mill race below.

They heard him strike the water with a splash and then all was still.

"We'll strike up to the Star and let Barney know we did him," remarked the leader, as they hurried away.

It would have been better perhaps if the Boss of the Camp had not been quite so merciful.

Nothing short of a vigilance committee and a few yards of rope would permanently settle the troubles in Death Valley.

So the miners thought, and at that very moment a party of mounted men rode out of the camp.

They were all heavily armed and Sam Pitman, the gambling-house keeper, was in the lead.

"We want peace and quiet down hyar, boys," he said. "We are out for business and the Boss of the Camp is good enough for us every time. We don't want no more of them toughs."

"Good for you, Sam! That means vigilantes!" cried Jerry Brown.

"That's what it does," replied Sam, grimly. "Gents, you can't expect a boy like him to be up to what we are up to. He's the bravest feller that ever trod in two shoes; and all he needs is experience. He's entitled to his position in this yer camp, and so far as I'm concerned he's going to have it. While he's gone let's finish the business for him and do what he's too tender-hearted to do."

There was a general murmur of assent and other remarks followed.

Later on just after midnight Sam Pitman made his start. What the end of it all was we shall see later on.

Just fancy coming to one's senses after a knockout blow to find yourself flying through the air.

That was Harry's case.

The force with which his head struck the rocks had been terrible.

It deprived the boy of all consciousness for the time being, and it was just as he went over the edge of the precipice that his wits returned.

"I'm a goner," thought Harry, and then, as the thought flashed through his mind, he went plump into the creek and was swept away in a moment.

He could not swim a stroke—few boys in that



part of the far West can, for there are neither lakes nor rivers to learn in.

If Badman's Creek had been as low as it usually was his brains would have been dashed out in an instant, but fortunately there had been considerable rain back among the mountains of late and the creek was swollen to unusual proportions.

The force of the current sent Harry's head under and he rose again, spluttering and gasping, to find himself entangled in the branches of a dead palm tree, which was being swept down the stream. This saved his life.

"By thunder, that's a close call!" gasped Harry. "Wonder how it all happened. Did I roll over or was I thrown over? I can't tell."

He could not decide until he thought of the mill certificate. When he felt for it and found it missing he guessed the truth.

"This is more of Barney's work," he muttered. "Well, I might have known it. Perhaps I was a fool to let those fellows off so easy. Never mind. My turn will come again and then—hello! I'm all right now."

The tree swung around and lodged for the instant between two big rocks.

Harry gave one spring, landing on the rock on the right, while the tree, instantly dislodging itself, was swept away.

"Help! Help! Help!"

At the same moment a cry was heard in the distance.

It came again and again as Harry ran along the narrow bank.

"There's some one in trouble down there!" he thought. "Who can it be? Who in the world can be stuck here on Badman's Creek this time of night?"

Stumbling over the rocks, sometimes half in the water, where the rocks came right down to the stream, he ran on until in a few moments he came to a point where the creek widened out.

There, standing upon a boulder in the middle of the stream, was a man bareheaded and drenched with water.

"Hello! Who are you? How did you come there?" Harry called out.

"Ah! Help at last!" cried the man. "Get me off of this if you can! My horse has been swept away and I'm almost dead."

"Can't you swim?" called Harry.

"Not a stroke."

"Neither can I, but I think I can fix you out all right if you'll do just as I say. Jump in. The current will carry you near shore and I can grab you then."

"Then for heaven sake let's try it," replied the man. "My name's Rollins. I'm from Chicago. I started to ride from Manning to the North Star mine. Somehow I managed to miss my way and here I am stuck in this hole."

"Rob's father!" cried Harry. "Well, this is more than strange."

doubt have been able to engage a dozen men if they wanted that many, as luck would have it they could not get one.

After waiting around Manning several hours they started off just before the evening train came in and made the best of their way back to the mine, only to find the drift closed and Harry missing.

"Where can he be?" exclaimed Rob. "I might have known it. Barney's gang have been here and carried him off, like as not. I had no business to leave him alone."

"Don't you think," said Jennie, "that we had better take away the stone and see if he's not in the drift. Of course I don't suppose he would ever stay there, but—"

"But it's impossible!" broke in Rob. "The stone could never be put in place like that from the inside, but all the same I'll pull it away and make sure."

"No, you won't, young feller! You'll leave it right where it is!" said a deep voice behind him. "Tain't no use for you to kick the stone; your pardner's dead and you are going to die too."

Rob faced around and saw a man with his left arm in a sling standing behind him.

There were six others close beside him, too, all armed with rifles. Seen there in the moonlight, they looked grim and determined, and as Rob recognized Barney as the leader, his heart sank.

"Dead!" he cried. "Who killed him? You?"

"None of your danged biz! Is that Dan Mills' darter you've got there with you?"

"Yes, I'm Dan Mills' daughter, and Dan Mills' daughter can fight!" cried Jennie, whipping out her revolver and firing straight at Barney's head.

The shot was a miss and Jennie did not have the chance to try it again.

Instantly the men sprang upon them.

Rob tried to draw, but the revolver was dashed out of his hand, and, before he knew it, he was sprawling on the sand.

"We've got 'em this time!" cried Barney. "Hold the girl, some of you. I'll deal with this fellow right here."

It was a bad outlook for Rob as he stood there a prisoner among the toughs after they dragged Jennie away.

Barney stood facing him, revolver in hand.

"What do you know about this here place?" he demanded. "What's this stone that you were going to take away?"

"I don't know what you mean?" replied Rob, sturdily.

"Oh yes, you do," sneered Barney. "There's something queer about the North Star mine. I'm on to it. There's an opening here somewhere what leads into one of the drifts. I heard Dan Mills talking about it down to Wickedsburg. You know where it is and you'll tell or—"

"Or what?" asked Rob, as he paused.

"Or die!"

"You'll never get anything out of me," replied Rob. "What do you know about Harry Holloway? Have you killed him?"

"Yes, we have and we propose to serve you the same unless you tell the secret of the North Star mine."

"Don't! Oh, don't do it, Barney!" cried Jennie. "I'll tell."

"You mustn't, Jennie. You shall not!" Rob cried. "I don't believe that Harry is dead."

## CHAPTER XXIII.—The Vigilantes Have Their Revenge.

Rob and Jennie returned to the North Star a little before midnight and they returned alone. They had been entirely unsuccessful in their mission. While at another time they would no



"Throw up your rifles, boys! Make ready to fire!" said Barney. "I'm going to do this fellow. Dan Mills' daughter will tell us all we want to know."

Instantly six rifles were levelled at poor Rob. Jennie screamed and fell to the ground in a dead faint.

"Fire! cried Barney.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

No six rifles but as many as twenty-six spoke then, the shots coming from the top of the bluff above, upon which stood the buildings of the North Star mine.

With a sharp cry Barney fell dead.

Four of his men shared his fate, while the remaining two took to their heels and ran like mad down the hill toward Death Valley camp.

"Three cheers for the vigilantes!" rang out overhead. "That settles the murder of the Boss of our Camp!"

Rob, at whom never a shot had been fired by the toughs, sprang away from the wall, and looking up, saw a great crowd of men on top of the bluff.

"There's another one. Kill him!" shouted Sam Pitman, turning his rifle on the boy.

"Stop! Don't fire!" Rob fairly yelled. "I'm Rob Rollins. Tell me, is it true that Harry Holloway is dead?"

#### CHAPTER XXIV.—Conclusion.

"Yes, I guess it is true, fast enough, and more's the pity, for the boss was a brave one," continued Sam. "You see, we struck two of them fellers thar in the mine office. They told us how it happened. The boss went over to Wickedsburg with his gold and they laid for him on the way back. Caught him with a rope and chucked him into Badman's Creek. Blame shame, just as we thought we'd got him back again down thar in the camp."

It was a sad day for every one.

They buried their victims and started to return to their work.

Rob and Jennie did not know what to do, and very likely would have gone with them, but just before the start was made a large company of men came riding into the mine yard on horses.

It was the day of the auction, althought Rob did not know it.

An hour was spent in examining the property and there were more arrivals as the time sped on.

When at last Mr. Blake, the auctioneer took his stand at the door of the shaft-house there were as many as forty men assembled.

"Now then, gentlemen, we are about to offer this valuable mining property for sale to the highest bidder!" began Mr. Blake. "Terms, one-third cash down and balance on approved notes. This is the North Star. The famous North Star, etc."

Mr. Blake launched out into a long description of the property and the bidding began. The North Star had a bad name and nobody wanted it. The crowd of miners had come there because they wanted to buy the property cheap.

Bidding rose slowly up to \$50,000.

Then it was a fight between a Mr. Quimby, of Tucson, and Lawyer Nugent, of Manning, representing nobody knew who.

"Fifty-one thousand!" cried Quimby.

"Make it fifty-one!" responded Nugent.

"Fifty-one two," added Quimby, and so it kept on rising a hundred dollars at a time up to fifty-five thousand, when all at once two mounted men came dashing into the yard.

"Sixty thousand!" cried the foremost, catching Quimby's last bid.

"Harry!" gasped Rob. "Oh, Jennie! Look there! Harry and my father! Hooray! Hooray!"

Rob could not help it. He was so overjoyed that he called right out in meeting and in spite of everybody forced his way through the crowd to where the newcomers had halted. But before he got there the fate of the North Star had been decided.

Quimby dropped out at sixty thousand, Nugent fell at seventy, at which sum the mine was knocked down to Harry Holloway, amid wild cheers from the Death Valley contingent, who, entirely unable to restrain themselves, kept shouting out.

"Hooray for the Boss of the Camp!"

It was not until it was all over that Rob and Jennie managed to force their way to Harry's side.

It was a joyful meeting.

"The bravest boy I ever saw, Rob!" declared Mr. Rollins. "I lost my way and came near losing my life, too. It was Harry Holloway who saved it and now he has saved my mine and my fortune into the bargain, if what he tells me is true."

The gold he had taken to the mill footed up more than \$50,000, so he had enough to meet the obligations and enough to spare.

Those who had come to the sale expecting to buy a cheap mine went away disappointed, and Mr. Rollins, who represented his creditors, took possession of the property.

Holloway & Rollins were the owners of the North Star now and they decided to put Rollins, Sr., in charge.

One year later Holloway & Rollins were worth millions; two millions would not have bought the North Star and their Death Valley claim was averaging ten thousand dollars a month.

Mr. Rollins paid his creditors in full and still remains at the mine with his son and daughter-in-law, for it was Rob who married Jennie and not Harry, as some expected would be the case.

No; our hero is still a single man, as well as a very rich one.

Next week's issue will contain "333; OR, THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME."

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# AL, THE ATHLETE, OR, THE CHAMPION OF THE CLUB

By R. T. BENNETT

(A Serial Story)

## CHAPTER XXII.

### The Champion of the Club.

Most of the Peerless boys stood near. Nixon now addressed them as follows:

"Boys, you can consider the club in session. I now call for the expulsion of Horace Hackett as an unfit member. All those in favor of kicking him out in disgrace can signify the same by saying 'Aye!'"

"Aye!" roared every member, angrily.

"Motion is carried! Hackett, you are no longer a member of the Peerless Athletic Club. Get off of these grounds. If you don't hurry about it we will run you out of the place—do you understand?"

His face burning with shame and mortification, the guilty young rascal hung his head and slouched away, followed by the jeers and taunts of every one, for the whole crowd looked upon him with contempt.

In the meantime Bud had recovered, and had gone to the dressing-room, accompanied by Al and Jennie, to attend to his injuries.

Shortly after Nixon came in and stated what they had done to Hackett, apologized for the sad affair, and asked Bud if he could participate in any more events.

"Certainly," said Bud. "Come ahead; I am all right now."

Bud returned to the track with Nixon, and a tremendous cheer greeted young Harlow when he made his appearance before the people.

He bowed and smiled, and when the noise and excitement subsided the athletic games went on again.

A running long dive on the ground was the next event, and half a dozen boys from each club lined up as participants.

They ran for a distance of fifty yards to the end of a plank, and dove forward, landing upon big pads which were stretched out to receive them on their hands and knees.

The event was won by a Peerless boy, with a record of 10 feet.

A tug-of-war and some bar-chinning followed this, leaving the two clubs tied up to the last and deciding event.

This was a match between Al and Nixon, and everybody was on the alert for this event between the captains of the two clubs.

It was to be the last and deciding contest.

Just then the two runners appeared on the cinder track.

Al wore a blue running suit, while Nixon was clad in white.

The two boys were pretty evenly matched in size, strength and skill, and a murmur of admiration escaped many people when they saw what fine muscular figures they had

After some talk with the referee the contestants went to the scratch and bent over on their hands.

Crack! went the starter's pistol.

The runners were off like greyhounds.

Up to the first quarter they ran side by side.

Then a wild yell escaped the spectators as Nixon forged ahead.

Al was watching him closely, but there was the shadow of a smile hovering around the corners of his mouth as he saw that the Peerless boy was now straining every muscle to distance him.

"He is using up his reserve force too early in the game," he thought, grimly.

By the time they reached the half Nixon was five feet in advance of Al, —and still seemed to be gaining.

"Hit it up, Nixon!" wildly yelled one of the Roxbury rooters.

"Run away from him, Joe!" added another.

"You've got Adams skinned to death at the go-off!" howled a third.

The Midwood contingent in the meantime was shouting advice to Al, but the boy paid no attention to what they said.

At the three-quarters Nixon was ten feet in the lead, and to the onlookers it seemed as if Al was hopelessly beaten.

But just then the Midwood boy came up with a tremendous rush, and, reaching Nixon when within five yards of the finish, he suddenly shot past him and hit the tape six feet in the lead.

"Hurrah for Alless Adams, the champion of the club!" yelled Marsh, wildly.

And the response came from everybody in the grandstand.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### Capturing the Crooks.

Several days later Al went to court to appear against the tramps, whose trial was set for that date, and a sensation was created when it was discovered that the hoboes were missing.

Their bail bonds were forfeited, of course, and the lawyer who had put up the security was mulcted in the amount of his bond.

He took his loss coolly enough, for the fact was, he had not lost anything by the operation, as Mr. Drew had really put up the money.

It was a prearranged plot to get the tramps out of the way so they could not appear in court and expose Drew.

When Al left the courtroom some one touched him on the arm, and he found Fox, the detective, beside him.

"The trial turned out just exactly as I supposed it would," said the officer, as he walked along beside the boy. "Drew was behind that bail bond, of course, and he is mighty willing to lose the amount to keep Scotty where we cannot question him as to who hired him to abduct the Harlow boy. If he imagines that the disappearance of the hoboes is going to save him he is very much mistaken."

"Why, are you going to hunt for the tramps?"

"I haven't got to hunt!" confided the officer with a chuckle. "I've got Scotty located already, boy, and I simply mean to pick up the gentleman



and produce him in court. I am cured of my sprained ankle now."

Al's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"Bully for you!" he could not help exclaiming.

"I am going after Scotty to-night," said the detective.

"Is he hidden far from Midwood, Mr. Fox?"

"Within a mile of the place."

"By jingo, I wish I could go with you!"

"And so you can, if you wish. But there may be a fight, and I would not care to have you get into trouble."

"Oh, I'll run chances on that!" answered the young athlete, quietly.

"Then meet me in front of the drug store to-night at eight."

"Thank you for the privilege, sir."

Then Al went home.

Promptly at eight o'clock the boy was in front of the drug store, and Mr. Fox joined him and said:

"Ready, Al?"

"Lead the way," answered the boy.

"Our route is toward Digman's tavern."

"Is that where the hobo is hidden?"

"Yes. He is there by appointment."

"With whom?"

"William Drew."

"How did you find that out?"

"By watching Drew."

"That's rather indefinite, sir."

"But it's easily explained. I saw an office boy of Drew's mail a letter in the lamp-post box, addressed to a party named Scott, in New York. I waited for the postman who collected the mail and convinced him that I mailed that letter by mistake, and got him to open the box and give it to me. At my hotel I steamed open the envelope and read these words: Digman's Tavern, at nine o'clock Wednesday night, in disguise. You can then get to Canada with your pals. Your bail bonds were forfeited, and that will be the end of that matter, as long as you keep out of sight. Look out for Fox. He is watching, and suspects me. W. D."

"What a give-away!" laughed Al.

It was only a mile walk down the dusty country road to Digman's tavern, and it proved to be a little old-fashioned building, standing lonely and solitary beside the road.

The detective and the young athlete stole around to the rear of the tavern and peered into the windows.

In a small room behind the bar they caught sight of William Drew, who was pacing nervously up and down the room.

"There's the rogue!" Al said.

"Hush!" breathed the detective. "Don't utter a word!"

They watched the man for ten minutes.

The clock in the barroom struck nine.

A moment later the door opened and a man strode into the room, who had a clean-shaven face, bushy eyebrows, and who was clad in a rather stylish suit of clothes.

It was hard to believe that this individual was Scotty, the tramp, and yet such proved to be the fact, as they quickly found out.

"Hello, Drew, ole feller!" was the greeting he gave the mill-owner, in rough tones, as he advanced into the room. "I sees dat ver ken' ver

woid ter be here wid de scads. An it's mighty lucky fer youse dat yer did!"

"Are you prepared to skip to Canada?"

"Bet yer life. Got the dough with yer?"

"Yes," assented the mill-owner, with a nod, as he pulled a big wad of yellow-backs out of his pocket and handed it over. "Here you are."

The tramp greedily clutched the money and hastily counted it.

"Correct," was his verdict at last.

"You are satisfied, I hope?"

"Puffeckly," assented the hobo. "I'm off now!"

"Hold on, there!" roared a voice in the open window.

With cries of alarm the two men suddenly wheeled around, and there was Detective Fox, aiming a revolver at them, a dangerous look on his face as he added:

"I've got you both dead to rights! If you don't instantly hold up your hands above your heads I'll drop you with a bullet!"

For an instant there was a deep silence.

The tramp and his employer had turned as pale as death.

Then Scotty burst forth into a torrent of terrible abuse against the mill-owner, swearing that he had been made the victim of a trap.

"You wait!" he howled. "When I'm lugged up before the judge I'm a-goin' ter give yer clean away, yer blamed ole sneak!"

"I had nothing to do with this!" protested Drew hoarsely. "For heaven's sake, don't give me away and I'll pay you \$10,000 more!"

Late one afternoon, some time after the foregoing events took place, Al went down to the gym, where he found all the boys of the Midwood Junior Athletic Club practicing their usual exercises.

He passed a few words with the boys, and, donning his boating costume, he entered a beautiful cedar skiff his father had given him and rowed out on the Red River against a pretty strong current.

Pretty soon he arrived near a beautiful estate, the grounds of which, covered with big trees, ran down to the river bank.

A sweet, girlish voice on shore suddenly sung out:

"Boat ahoy!"

Al glanced over his shoulder and saw Jennie Harlow, clad in a white dress and hat, with a blue parasol over her shoulder, standing among the trees, laughing and waving her handkerchief to him.

"Ahoy, the girl!"

"Luff up there and take me aboard!" she cried, mischievously.

"Ay, ay, ma'am!" replied Al, with a grin, and he rowed to the shore.

"Going to give me a boat ride?" she asked, pertly.

"Nothing would please me more," replied Al, standing up and aiding her to embark. "To tell you the candid truth, I rowed up this way in the hope of seeing you in the yard."

(To be continued)



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NEW YORK, AUGUST 3, 1927

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## INTERESTING ARTICLES

### IDEAL AIRPLANE WOOD

Spruce, being a tall, straight tree comparatively free from knots, is the preferred wood for airplane framework because of its lightness, straight grain and the ease and accuracy with which it can be worked up into "sticks" of small cross sections. The wing beams of the Spirit of St. Louis were made of spruce.

### BUILDS PRIVATE MUSEUM

Charles Q. Eldredge of Old Mystic, Conn., eighty years old, has built with his own hands a "private museum" to house his collection of more than 7,000 curios. The museum stands on a stone foundation twenty feet high, which Eldredge laid himself in order to build into the side of a high bank.

Among Eldredge's curios is the first incandescent lamp made by Thomas A. Edison and a hammer from the boyhood home of Abraham Lincoln.

### CITY WOMEN BUY HOMES

Many salaried women in New York are putting their savings into little places in the country, from ten to 200 miles outside the city. During the Winter they buy furnishings for what looks sometimes from the outside like a shack. The first hint of Spring and they are off on an early Saturday afternoon train to look things over, and they continue their week-end excursions until the long-awaited vacation period at last arrives.

These owners of country places are not the younger girls. They are mostly women to whom the word "home" means more as the years increase. They have reached the time when the discovery is made that if a woman wants a home of her own she must buy it herself. Seldom is this purchase made as a speculation. A woman who had bought a lot and a tool house and had devoted three years to converting the house into a home was offered ten times what she had paid for it.

## MOTOR DEATH TOLL INCREASED 7 PER CENT.

Deaths from automobile accidents in the large cities of the country are increasing, says the Department of Commerce, which announced recently that accidents were responsible for 529 fatalities in seventy-seven cities during the four weeks ended May 21, as compared to 493 during the same period last year. The total for the year ended May 21 was 6,938, as compared to 6,348 for the previous year, with respective death rates for 100,000 population of 21.9 and 20.4 an increase during the single year of 7 per cent.

For the four weeks just passed, seventy-five of the seventy-seven cities reported 519 fatalities, but only 450 of these occurred within city limits. In this period New York leads in the number of fatalities with eighty-two. Chicago is second with fifty and Detroit third with twenty-nine. For the annual period New York also leads with 1,112 fatalities, Chicago having 709 and Detroit 380.

## LAUGHS

"The world owes me a living," "Maybe it does, my boy, but you'll have to hustle like blazes to collect it."

Fair customer—I tell you that I wear a No. 2. Clerk—But, madam, this shoe that you just took off is a No. 4. Fair customer—Yes, I know; but it has stretched horribly.

"Your daughter plays some very robust pieces." "She's got a beau in the parlor," growled pa, "and that loud music is to drown the sound of her mother washing the dishes."

"That's a pretty speedy car of yours, isn't it?" "You bet your life it is! I've only had that car six months and I've paid out more money in fines than the car cost me originally."

"My son," said the father impressively, "suppose I should be taken away suddenly, what would become of you?" "Why," said the son, irreverently, "I'd stay here. The question is, what would become of you?"

A man who lives alongside of a cemetery was asked if it was not an unpleasant location. "No," said he; "I never resided in all my life with a set of neighbors that minded their own business so steadily as they do."

Peddler—I have a most valuable book to sell, madam; it tells one how to do anything. Lady (sarcastically)—Does it tell one how to get rid of a pestering peddler? Peddler (promptly)—Oh, yes, madam. Buy something from him.

"Mother, if a poor, hungry little boy was to come to the back door and ask for something to eat, would you give him that piece of pie that was left over from dinner?" "Yes, Willie, I think I should." "Well, just wait a minute till I run around to the back door."



## One Stormy Night

When the village of Frankfort was still an out-of-town suburb of Philadelphia I paid a visit to the former place in search of a hotel burglar whom I had followed from New York City.

Mose Randall was the man's real name, but he was also known by several aliases in different cities.

Feeling that I was on the track of my man, I resolved to put up at the tavern for the night and sally out in the morning in search of him.

The rascal had just robbed a jewelry store on Broadway, and he had shot the proprietor, who had interrupted him in his work.

The wounded man lived long enough to give us a fair description of his murderer, who wore a red flannel shirt and a slouched hat, and who spoke in very squeaking tones.

As it was announced in the papers that the jeweler was found dead in his store, the murderer was not aware that the detectives had a description of him.

While sitting in the barroom, listening to the wild storm without, the cry "Fire! Fire!" burst on my ears.

Two men in the room, who were members of a local fire company, instantly rushed out in the storm.

Being a fireman myself at the time, the magic words aroused me to action, and out I rushed with them.

Away toward Germantown a bright light appeared in the sky; and one of the firemen sung out:

"I'll bet a dollar it's the strange widow's house is going."

"I think so, too, Bill," responded the other man. "Here comes the engine. Rattle her along lively, fellows!"

I seized the rope of the fire-engine with the men, and we were soon rattling along toward the fire with some dozen others.

As we neared the house on fire one of the men from the tavern cried:

"I knew it was the strange widow's house, and we can't save a timber of it, fellers!"

Yet the firemen set about the work, while one of them cried out:

"Where's the young widow and her child? By jiminy, Ned, they must be in the house yet."

At that moment a terrified face appeared at a third-story window and a squeaking voice cried out to us:

"Fellers, I'm a goner if you don't get a ladder up to me."

I recognized the face and the voice on the instant, for Mose Randall was the man in the burning house.

And it looked as if the rascal was not to grace the gallows, as his rescue appeared to be impossible.

"How did Mose Randall happen to be in the burning building? Who is this strange widow they speak about?"

Moving around to the back of the house alone, I happened to glance along the lawn, when a flying figure attracted my attention. There was a vivid flash of lightning at the moment, and I

could plainly see a female form running along by a rustic seat near an old, withered oak tree.

The woman was making away from the public road, and she was running toward Germantown, but not in a direct path.

I made after her as fast as I could, but without uttering a single cry to attract the attention of the firemen.

I was close on her before she heard my footsteps, and she hastened on the faster, as she cried:

"Mercy, mercy! Has the wretch ascaped after all? Oh, how can I save my dear child?"

"Don't be alarmed, madam," I cried, "for I will not injure you or your child."

As I spoke, I took the child from the woman's arms, pressed her hand, and we turned to retrace our steps.

"For goodness sake, don't go near that house," she gasped, as an expression of horror swept over her face. "Did you see him? Were you at the fire?"

"Who are you speaking about? Calm yourself, and lean on my arm. We will not go near the house. Yes; I saw a man at the window on the top floor."

"Did you know him?"

"I did. It was a man I was looking for at the time."

"What for?"

"To arrest him for burglary and murder."

"Burglary and murder! Oh, why didn't I know that this evening! Was it a crime to kill such a wretch?"

"That depends on circumstances. No one killed Mose Randall, however. He perished in the flames."

We reached the tavern at Frankfort as soon as possible, and I procured a warm parlor on the first floor for the woman and her child.

Jane Vane was born and brought up in a Connecticut village, and her parents were struggling people.

At the age of eighteen she went to live in Brooklyn, where she had relatives, who promised to assist her.

Very soon after the young woman became acquainted with a clever young policeman, named John Powers, and they were soon married.

Just one year after their marriage John Powers was shot and killed by a burglar whom he was trying to arrest, and the murderer was never caught.

The young widow became housekeeper for an old widower in Harlem, who soon commenced to make love to her.

Among the guests at the old fellow's house was a man in the prime of life who hailed from Philadelphia.

This man pretended to be a person of means, and when he fell in love with Jane and offered to marry her she consented.

By the merest accident she discovered that he was a professional burglar, and she then became thoroughly disgusted with him and insisted on leaving him.

Then Mose Randall swore that he would kill her little son if she put on any airs with him.

Soon after the exposure the gang of burglars, of which Mose Randall was second in command, hired the old house and property near Frankfort, and Jane was placed there with her son



She was compelled to announce that she was a widow of some means desiring a quiet home; and her only companions were an old colored man and his wife, who were the sworn servants of the burglars.

Jane was not long in the place before she discovered that the old widower of Harlem was the leader of the burglars, and she soon met him there also.

The old rascal commenced to make love to her at once, telling her that her marriage with Mose Randall was a mock affair, and offering to make her his real wife and set her up in a good home in New York City or Brooklyn.

Then the young woman became furious, and she threatened to leave the wretch at once.

"You can go if you like," was the reply, "but you must leave the boy after you. If you attempt to betray us he will die as sure as fate."

The poor creature was subdued again, as she could not bear the thought of being separated from her boy.

Jane was brooding over her miserable position, when she gained strength of mind to attempt an escape with her boy, saying to herself:

"Why can I not go down to the city and then go on to the West? I can hide there somewhere. I cannot stand this miserable life any longer."

Acting on the impulse, the young woman packed a few things in a carpet-bag, secured some money and jewels, and hastened down to take the stage at the village.

It was a vain hope.

She was getting out of the stage with her boy, when a rough hand grabbed her arm and a squeaking voice whispered into her ear:

"You can't escape while I live. If you attempt to get away again I will take that brat from you and keep him where you'll never find him. I am a hunted man at present and I must remain here under cover for some time. See that you make it as pleasant for me as possible."

"How will I make away with the infamous wretch?" she asked herself. "I will look for a pistol and shoot him."

Laying her child on his bed, as he was sound asleep, she stole out to look for a weapon, as well as to watch Mose Randall's actions.

When the young woman saw the rascal enter his room a sudden idea took possession of her mind, and she said to herself:

"I will shut the wretch in there, set the house on fire, and escape with my dear boy."

At that moment a tremendous peal of thunder shook the house to the foundations, the lightning flashed furiously an instant before, and then there was a crash of a falling chimney.

Springing to the door, the young woman turned on the spring lock, as she cried, in half-maddened tones:

"Die—die, you hateful wretch! Now to escape with my baby!"

After she had told her story, Jane asked me, eagerly:

"And do you consider my crime a terrible one now?"

"I don't imagine that a jury will convict you, providing they believe your story as I do."

"Then what will you do with me?"

Before I could answer, a window-pane was broken in with a crash, and then a pistol shot rang out above the howling of the storm outside.

I sprang toward the window on the instant, drawing my pistol and firing as I advanced, discharging two shots in rapid succession.

Another shot was fired by the person outside the window and a ball struck me on the forehead.

Staggering back, I fell to the floor, but consciousness did not leave me, although I was somewhat dazed.

I scarcely touched the floor when Jane was over me, and dragging the revolver from my grasp, she cried:

"I will kill the wretch who has slain my boy."

Out into the yard she sprang, and then over the fence, and I made after her as fast as I could, while some of the people in the tavern ran after me, sending up shouts of alarm.

We had not proceeded far from the tavern when two pistol shots rang out, followed by a yell of mortal agony.

"I hit the villain!" cried the frantic woman, as she dashed toward a man lying prostrate on the side of the road. "If he's not dead, I'll finish him for shooting my dear boy."

She was bending over the prostrate man and aiming the revolver at his head, as she cried: "Who are you, wretch? Mercy on me, but it is Mose Randall!"

It was Mose Randall, and the villain's career was closed forever.

We bore the agitated woman back to the room where her wounded boy was lying.

A doctor was sent for, and the poor creature was placed in a bed, while her boy was laid on a sofa.

The little fellow was all right in a few weeks, but it was a full year after before his fond mother could recognize him.

Jane recovered her natural state of mind eventually, and she lived to see her son a prosperous man.

I could not imagine how Mose Randall escaped from the burning building.

It was one of the many mysteries that could never be cleared up.

## MONKEY SOUNDS ALARM IN RAID ON HUGE STILL

Warned by the shrill chattering of a small black monkey which had been placed on guard at a front window, three men escaped recently when Prohibition Agents entered a three-story brick house at No. 152 McCran Avenue, Arrochar, S. I., and found a distilling plant they said was capable of turning out annually \$200,000 worth of whisky at present bootleg prices.

The agents, Henry Spahr, Richard McKnight and Edward Kohler, reported seizing a 750-gallon still, 800 gallons of alcohol and two 1,800-gallon vats of mash. They estimated the equipment cost at least \$30,000 to install.

The equipment and the monkey later were transferred to Brooklyn warehouses. The agents who said the plant was operated by a Manhattan bootleg ring, declared they hoped to arrest the owner of the building within twenty-four hours on charges of manufacturing and illegal possession of liquor.



## TIMELY TOPICS

## HOW FINLAND FIGHTS FIRE

Strict construction regulations have minimized the fire menace in Finland, according to a recent issue of Public Safety, official organ of the National Safety Council. In a country where a great deal of timber is used in the construction of a majority of the buildings there has been no great conflagration in half a century. Even fires that spread to neighboring houses are very rare; the last fire of this type took place about ten years ago, when four houses were destroyed.

No wooden roofs are allowed, and wooden buildings are limited to one story in the smaller towns and to two in the larger. A space of eighteen feet is required between wooden structures, and windows are not allowed to face a neighboring house. It is necessary that the floors, stairs and staircases of stone structures be made fireproof. In addition to these and other such regulations, the Fire Department service is said to be organized in a most efficient manner.

## WORKMEN OF BELGIUM ARE NOW PROSPERING

The comparatively prosperous condition of the working people of Belgium, despite temporary hardships due to stabilization of the currency last year, is pictured in a speech delivered by M. Wauters, the Socialist Minister of Labor, at the recent national convention of the Belgian Miners' Union.

"For the sake of stabilizing Belgian currency we have made great sacrifices," said M. Wauters, "but we shall not regret them. The evil effects of stabilization are, thus far, not so great as we feared they might be. The cost of living has certainly risen, but not as much as was feared. Even now the cost of living is lower in Belgium than in other countries.

"Of our 607,000 insured workers, only 11,000 are entirely unemployed, while 19,000 are on part time. All the trade unions are raising their dues, and yet their membership is rising."

## ENGLISH DRUG STORES URGED TO COPY THE AMERICAN PATTERN

America has seen her drug stores pass through a period of change. She has watched the old-style drug store evolve into an emporium devoted to the sale of notions. Now the English drug store is apparently about to undergo a change. An expert at the recent Chemists' Exhibition in London said that the English apothecary of the future must live on his side lines. According to this expert, there is more profit to be made from the sale of a toothbrush than in making up a prescription.

Commenting on the proposed changes, The Manchester Guardian asserts that more people now consult doctors and go from the doctors to the chemist's shop for medicines than ever before. What, then, it asks, is the reason for the sudden desire on the part of the chemists to advance the sale of specialties?

The American pharmacist has had more to contend with than has the European. Crusades against the use of drugs in treating human ailments, as well as an increase in the number of kinds of practitioners who practice without the aid of drugs, have been more evident here than on the Continent. Choosing the lines of least resistance, the American druggist has found it profitable to vary his stock.

The English chemist's wish to dabble in notions has aroused surprise. English pride is ruffled to think that the staid chemist's shop may follow the American example.

## CONSCIENCE TRAPS FUGITIVE

An uneasy conscience, which prompted him to slink away from policemen, led to the arrest recently of James Morrison, twenty-five years old, of 25 South Street, or James Anderson, which he says is his other name, on a charge of being a fugitive from justice. He was held for hearing July 18, when arraigned before Magistrate Flood in Yorkville Court.

In making his rounds in Madison Square recently, Patrolman Velton, of the East Twenty-second Street station, observed that when he approached, Morrison always arose and went to another bench. Finally Velton questioned him.

Morrison, police said, had been serving a sentence of from six to eight years in the Georgia penitentiary for safe blowing in Savannah, in 1924. He escaped and fled the country, later returning to the United States because of a desire to visit his home in Baltimore. He told police that whenever he saw a uniformed law officer his conscience troubled him. Georgia authorities have been notified.

## MARINER STARTS HIS SOLO ATLANTIC TREK

Amid the din of ship and factory whistles the little forty-foot schooner Despatch, manned alone by Hugo Hoahna, who is returning to his wife and three children awaiting him in Las Palmas, Canary Islands, sailed down Narragansett Bay recently provisioned for a possible three months at sea.

With Hoahna at the helm, the little schooner was towed down the Providence River and as soon as the wind filled her sails she was cast adrift by the tug.

The lone mariner expects to take the northern route home, a voyage that will compel him to travel more than 4,000 miles. He plans to sleep days and take the helm at night so that his ship will not be run down by trans-Atlantic liners.

Fear is felt along the waterfront that Hoahna will never arrive at his destination, as the ship, which he bought as an abandoned hulk for \$75 and refitted, is regarded as too small to weather storms.

Hoahna is carrying thirteen barrels of water for ballast, just to show the superstitious seafaring men that there is nothing alarming in the mysterious number.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### POISON IVY RELIEVED BY SIMPLE COMPOUND

According to James F. Couch of the United States Department of Agriculture, victims of poison ivy will find quick relief in a 5 per cent. solution of potassium permanganate, which can be made up by any druggist. The solution can be swabbed on the poisoned places with a bit of absorbent cotton or a soft cloth. The permanganate leaves a brown stain, which can be removed by washing with a 1 per cent. solution of oxalic acid, a 1 per cent. solution of sodium bisulphite—or even with plain soap and water.

If the skin has been very much broken by scratching or otherwise and is raw, the oxalic acid will cause a temporary stinging; in this case soap and water are preferable for removing stains. If the skin is very tender the solution of potassium permanganate may be diluted with water before using.

### ASKS SCHOOLS TO PRESS DRIVE TO SAVE CHILDREN FROM AUTOS

Warning that the school safety campaign against street accidents to children must not be relaxed during the Summer months has been sent to Principals of Summer high schools, vacation schools and vacation playgrounds by Superintendent of Schools Dr. William J. O'Shea.

"Relaxation of this campaign during the Summer months would result in much lost ground," Dr. O'Shea wrote.

"Moreover, during the Summer period the accident hazards are greatly augmented by the release of a million children from the regular schools and by the increased use of motor vehicles."

During June 1,441 children under 16 years of age were injured in street accidents in the city and forty-three killed.

### AGES OF CHAUFFEURS

According to the American Child, official organ of the National Child Labor Committee, there are listed as chauffeurs (exclusive of draymen, teamsters, expressmen, drivers for bakeries and groceries, etc.) in the United States Census of 1920 a total of 8,323 youths under 18 years of age. Of this number, which is, of course, much smaller than the number of boys and girls of the same age who are driving cars of their own, their parents or their friends, 784 are under 16, the age limit in several States for the granting of an operator's license. The age of 16 is represented by 2,358, while 5,181 are between 17 and 18 years.

The article points out that in nine States there is no age requirement for an operating license and that in five there is none for a chauffeur's license. In eight States, children under 16 may obtain licenses permitting them to serve as chauffeurs for hire. Sixteen require the applicant to be at least 18 in order to be a chauffeur within their boundaries.

### WHALEBACK TURNS PIRATE

The steamer Turner, one of a fleet of stodgy whalebacks built at Superior, Wis., about thirty-five years ago, and a familiar craft plying the Great Lakes for many years, has become a pirate ship of 1927. The old whaleback, which at various times carried the names of Trader, Blue Hill, Presidente Estrada, Yuma and Cabrera, was intercepted by New York coast guardsmen as she entered quarantine, and a search of the "pig," a name once applied to the queer-shaped vessel, revealed 10,000 cases of whisky and 7,500 gallons of malt aboard, the cargo being valued at half a million dollars—in short, a "blind pig."

The vessel was designed by the late Captain McDougall of Duluth, Minn., for bulk iron ore transportation. Fresh-water tars know the whalebacks, a few of which continue to pass up and down the lakes, as pigs, because of their shape. No longer are the picturesque oddities being built.

This boat cleared from Halifax and was bound for Japan—at least that's what the papers said. The boilers went bad, and the ship was pointed toward New York—a good place to unload that valuable cargo, while Japan was left waiting.

### ASTROLOGY PUT TO A NEW USE

The latest development of astrological science, in which many people seem to believe, is that of forecasting accidents to steamships, railroad trains, or airplanes; or of explaining after the event the astral reasons that caused it to happen. Serious consideration is given to the matter by M. Scriabine in the *Revue d'Astrologie* in which he lays down the rules upon which horoscopes are to be cast.

It is necessary to know the exact time of the birth of a person whose fate is to be read in the stars. But what is the date of the nativity of a boat, a flying machine or a railroad train? Clearly enough, we are told, that of a vessel is the moment in which it is launched, and that of an air craft when it first rises from the earth. That of a railroad train is less easy to determine, since the engine and the cars may have been built and put into use at different times; so as a compromise the time when the train sets out from the station on any given run must be taken as that of its nativity.

On such a basis M. Scriabine undertakes to determine and describe the astral causes of various recent railway accidents, casting horoscopes with a formidable array of malign aspects. For example: "Jupiter squared Saturn"; "Jupiter opposed Neptune"; "Mars in conjunction with Uranus squared Jupiter and passed to the half-square of Uranus," etc.—all crystal clear, no doubt, to the adept; but bewildering to the mere layman. However, there comes at the end this saving clause: "From such planetary aspects has proceeded a torrent of cosmic influences, which however could not produce its unfavorable effect upon the railways."

The moral seems therefore to be that before purchasing a railway ticket one should consult an astrologer; and then, no matter what he says, go ahead and board the train!



# PLUCK AND LUCK

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